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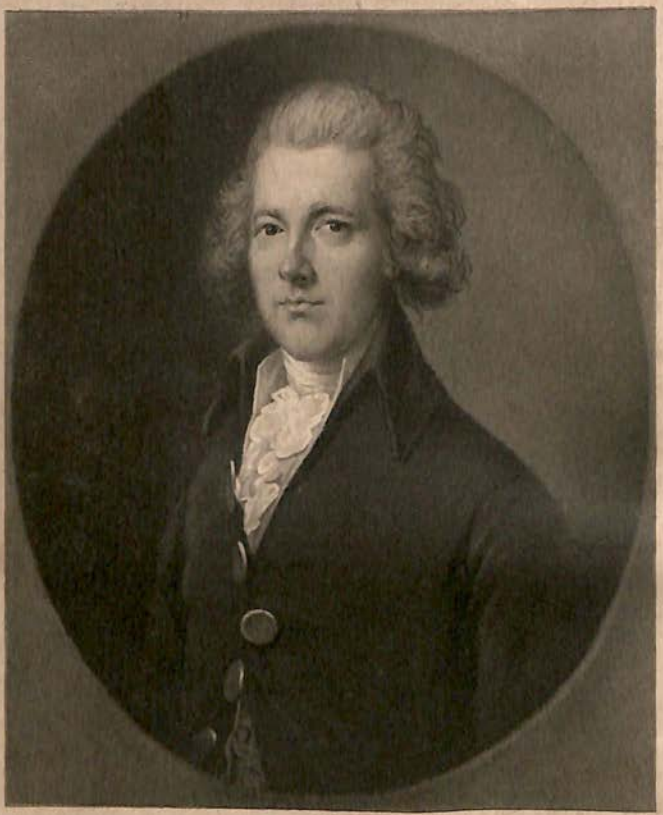

Engraved by W. Holl.

Right. Hon.ble William Pitt.

From the original picture by Gainsborough in the possession of

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LIFE

OF

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE

WILLIAM PITT.

BY

EARL STANHOPE,

AUTHOR OF THE HISTORY OF ENGLAND FROM THE PEACE OF UTRECHT, AND CORRESPONDING MEMBER OF THE INSTITUTE OF FRANCE.

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LIFE

OF

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WILLIAM PITT.

CHAPTER XXIII.

1796—1797.

Rumoured marriage of Mr. Pitt and the Hon. Eleanor Eden — Projected invasion of Ireland — Wolfe Tone — The *Légion Noire* — French armament in Bantry Bay — Colonel Tate's expedition in the Bristol Channel — Landing at Ilfracombe, and at Fishguard — Battle off Cape St. Vincent — Mantua surrenders — The Pope submits — Preliminaries signed at Leoben — Partition of the Venetian States — Suspension of cash payments in England — Proceedings in Parliament upon it — Mutiny of the Fleet at Portsmouth — Appeased by the Government — Second mutiny at Sheerness — Debates in the House of Commons — The sailors return to their duty.

Busy and anxious as was the year 1796, Mr. Pitt had found opportunities to pass some short intervals of leisure at Holwood. There his nearest neighbour was now Lord Auckland at Beckenham. A close intimacy sprang up between them. Lord Auckland would often pass a day or two at Holwood, and Mr. Pitt a day or two at Beckenham.

It was not only the conversation of Lord Auckland in which Mr. Pitt took pleasure. He was much attracted by the grace and beauty as well as the superior mind of Lord Auckland's eldest daughter, the Hon. Eleanor Eden. She was born in July, 1777,

and therefore only eight years younger than Pitt. It would have been a very suitable marriage; and a report of it was not long in arising.

Lord Auckland himself noticed it as follows, in a letter to his friend Mr. John Beresford of Dublin:—

"December 22, 1796.

. . . . . .

"We are all well here, and I will take the occasion to add a few words of a private and confidential kind. You may probably have seen or heard by letters a report of an intended marriage between Mr. Pitt and my eldest daughter. You know me too well to suppose that if it were so I should have remained silent. The truth is she is handsome, and possessed of sense far superior to the ordinary proportion of the world; they see much of each other, they converse much together, and I really believe they have sentiments of mutual esteem; but I have no reason to think that it goes further on the part of either, nor do I suppose it is ever likely to go further."

Mr. Beresford thus replies:—

"December 27, 1796.

"I certainly heard of the report which you mention, and saw it in the newspapers. Lord Camden has more than once asked me if I knew anything about it. I answered, as I shall continue to do, that I knew nothing about it."[1]

This strong attachment—for such on Pitt's side at least it certainly was—did not, as many persons hoped, proceed to a proposal and a marriage. Shortly afterwards, however, some correspondence did take place

[1] Beresford Correspondence, vol. ii. pp. 141-143.

between Mr. Pitt and Lord Auckland. The letters remain in the possession of Lord Auckland's family, and there are neither copies nor originals among the manuscripts of Pitt. But I have heard them described by a person entirely to be relied on who has more than once perused them. Mr. Pitt began the subject. In his letter to Lord Auckland he avows in the warmest terms his affection for Miss Eden, but explains that in his circumstances he feels that he cannot presume to make her an offer of marriage. He further says that he finds each of his succeeding visits add so much to his unhappiness, that he thinks it will be best to remit them for the present.

The reply of Lord Auckland, as I am informed, acknowledges as adequate the explanation of Mr. Pitt. He was already, he says, aware in general of the circumstances of pecuniary debt and difficulty in which Mr. Pitt had become involved. He does not deny that the attachment of Mr. Pitt may have been fully appreciated; but he cannot wish any more than Mr. Pitt that his daughter, who, as one of many children, had a very small fortune of her own, should under some contingencies of office or of life be left wholly unprovided.

There were yet two further letters as to the manner in which the notes of congratulation which had already begun to arrive at Beckenham might best be answered. Pitt desired that the blame, if any, should be borne wholly by himself.

Thus most honourably, and without any breach of friendship on either side, ended this "love-passage"—

the only one, as I believe, in the life of Pitt. More than two years afterwards, in June, 1799, Miss Eden became the second wife of Lord Hobart, who succeeded in 1804 as Earl of Buckinghamshire. She had no children, and she died in 1851.

The account which Mr. Pitt in his first letter implies of his circumstances was unhappily but too well founded. It appears from Lord Cranworth's title-deeds that at this very period, namely, in 1797, the Minister found it requisite to raise a further mortgage of 7000*l.* on the small Holwood property. Even then he was still deeply in debt, to the extent, it was estimated by Mr. Rose, of at least 30,000*l.*

To this transaction from the private life of Mr. Pitt it may not be inappropriate if I here subjoin an account of his personal character and habits, as given at nearly the same time in the Diary of Mr. Charles Abbot:—

"*March* 17, 1796.—Dined at Butt's with the Solicitor-General and Lord Muncaster. Lord Muncaster was an early political friend of Mr. Pitt, and our conversation turned much upon his habits of life. Pitt transacts the business of all departments except Lord Grenville's and Dundas's. He requires eight or ten hours' sleep. He dines slightly at five o'clock upon days of business, and on other days after the House is up; but if thrown out of his regular dinner of one sort or the other, he becomes completely ill and unfit for business for a day or two. This has happened to him in the present Session. He will not suffer anybody to arrange his papers, and extract the important points for him. In his reception of the merchants, when they wait upon him, he is particularly desirous of satisfying

them that his measures are right. Lord Hawkesbury, on the contrary, entertains them with telling them what he knows of their business, instead of hearing what they have to tell him."

But from these personal details, interesting as they are, I must now pass to transactions of the gravest national importance, which marked the ensuing year as the most critical which, since the Revolution at least, England had ever known.

During the whole of the summer and autumn of 1796 General Hoche had been indefatigable in his exertions to prepare the invasion of Ireland. For a long time he was thwarted by the incapacity, perhaps even the ill-will, of the naval commanders employed. But at the beginning of December he had at Brest ready to embark fifteen thousand regular troops, with transports to convey them, escorted by about twenty frigates and seventeen sail of the line. With him were Colonel Shee, and other good officers of the former Irish Brigade in the French service; some of these, however, the less useful as having—two nephews of Colonel Shee amongst others—in great part forgotten their native language. There was also Wolfe Tone, newly raised to military rank, and full of his old ardour against the British Government. He had prepared Addresses and Proclamations to the peasantry of Ireland, and spoke confidently of a popular rising as soon as the invaders appeared.

In these preparations, though tending to all the horrors of civil strife and bloodshed, there was nothing at all repugnant to the rules and usages of war. But

the same can scarcely be said of another scheme of the French Government at this time. They had equipped a considerable number of felons and galley-slaves whom they designed to let loose on the shores of England, not with any hope of victory or conquest, but merely for the purpose of havoc and destruction. These wretches were by no means admitted into the French regular service; they formed a body apart, distinguished by black jackets, and called the *Légion Noire*. For commander they had Colonel Tate, an American officer who volunteered his services. Thus writes Wolfe Tone in his Journal of the 10th of November: "I saw the *Légion Noire* reviewed; about eighteen hundred men. They are the banditti intended for England, and sad blackguards they are. They put me in mind of the Green-boys of Dublin." And again on the 26th of the same month: "To-day, by the General's orders, I have made a fair copy of Colonel Tate's instructions, with some alterations, particularly with regard to their first destination, which is now fixed to be Bristol. If he arrives safe, it will be very possible to carry it by a *coup de main*, in which case he is to burn it to the ground. I cannot but observe here that I transcribed with the greatest *sang-froid* the order to reduce to ashes the third city of the British dominions, in which there is perhaps property to the amount of 5,000,000*l*. . . . . Yet once, again! The conflagration of such a city as Bristol! It is no slight affair; thousands and thousands of families, if the attempt succeeds, will be reduced to beggary. I cannot help it. If it must be, it must; and I will never blame the French for any degree of

misery which they may inflict on the people of England. . . . . The truth is I hate the very name of England; I hated her before my exile; I hate her since, and I will hate her always."

The Directory had sent their final orders to General Hoche while the negotiation with England was still in progress; and the armament sailed from Brest on the 15th of December, four days before the injunction to depart from Paris was transmitted to Lord Malmesbury. "We are all in high spirits," writes Wolfe Tone, "and the troops are as gay as if they were going to a ball." As the place of general *rendezvous*, Bantry Bay had been assigned them. The French ships succeeded in avoiding the English fleet which was cruising off the coast of Brittany. But, on the other hand, they were beset by thick fogs and heavy gales, and they came to be dispersed. Only a part of the armament could anchor in Bantry Bay. General Hoche, who had embarked in one of the frigates with his entire staff, found himself driven to another point of the coast. Here was a General without an army, and there an army without a General. The remaining chiefs had at one time resolved to land without him and push forward, but they found that they could muster not one half the original force, and these almost without artillery or stores. In the absence of Hoche, the Admiral refused his sanction to the scheme, and steered back to France. They reached Brest in safety, though not without some loss of ships, as Hoche, on his side, made his way to La Rochelle. All idea of this invasion was now relinquished, and Hoche was appointed to the command of

the army of Sambre and Meuse. "I do not wonder," writes Wolfe Tone, "at Xerxes whipping the sea; for I find myself to-night pretty much in the mood to commit some such rational action!"

The disappointment of Wolfe Tone was in proportion to his sanguine hopes in case a landing had been made. In these he most probably deceived himself. Certain it is that the Government of Ireland had taken most vigorous measures. Russell, Neilson, and other friends of Tone, on whose aid he reckoned, had already been arrested for High Treason. We find the Lord Lieutenant report to the Secretary of State that the Volunteers seemed to vie with the regular troops in loyal ardour; and he adds: "At the time the army was ordered to march, the weather was extremely severe. During their march the utmost attention was paid them by the inhabitants of the towns and villages through which they passed, so that in many places the meat provided by the Commissary was not consumed. . . . . The poor people often shared their potatoes with them, and dressed their meat without demanding payment. . . . . The roads which had in parts been rendered impassable by the snow were cleared by the peasantry. At Carlow a considerable subscription was made for the troops as they passed. . . . . A useful impression was made upon the minds of the lower Catholics by a judicious address from Dr. Moylen, the titular Bishop of Cork."[2]

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[2] Lord Camden to the Duke of Portland, January 10, 1797. Life of Grattan, by his Son, vol. iv. p. 265.

There still remained, however, the banditti expedition to England. In the hopes of more favourable weather, it did not set out till the month of February following. Then two French frigates, with a corvette and a lugger, sailed from Brest and entered the Bristol Channel, having on board Colonel Tate and about twelve hundred of his men. They anchored at Ilfracombe, and scuttled several merchantmen, but notwithstanding their instructions attempted no further progress in that quarter, learning that several bodies of Volunteers were in full march against them. Steering for the opposite coast of Pembrokeshire, they cast anchor in Fishguard Bay.[1] Here they landed and began to plunder. But here again the Volunteers and Militia were instantly in arms, commanded by Lord Cawdor. These were only a few hundred strong, but they were joined by great numbers of the country-people, armed with implements of husbandry, or with the first weapons they could find. Another incident of a ludicrous kind is said to have done good service. A large crowd of Welsh women had gathered on the beach, clad in the scarlet cloaks which then and for many years afterwards were in common use among the female peasantry of England, and these being seen from afar impressed the invaders with an idea of regular troops.

Under these circumstances Colonel Tate, greatly lowering his tone, sent a flag of truce with an offer of capitulation. Lord Cawdor answered by requiring the invaders to surrender themselves as prisoners of war; they complied; and next day accordingly laid down

their arms without a blow. Both the frigates which had brought them were captured on their return to France; and so ingloriously ended the unwarrantable enterprise.

This enterprise, however, was only designed as the forerunner of a more important one. To invade England upon a larger scale was now a favourite scheme with the French Directors. For this object they had recourse to their new allies at Madrid and at the Hague. It was designed that the main Spanish and also the main Dutch fleet should sail forth from their respective harbours and join the French armament at Brest. By this union—of perhaps full seventy ships of the line—they might have strength to command the British Channel, and to render easy a descent upon the British shores.

The main Spanish fleet at this time had for Admiral Don Joseph de Cordova, and lay in Carthagena Bay. It set sail on the 1st of February, with Cadiz for its first destination; but it was driven from its course by contrary winds to off Cape St. Vincent. There, on the 14th, it was encountered by Sir John Jervis with the British squadron from the Tagus. Cordova had with him twenty-five sail of the line. One of these, built at the Havana in 1769, and called the Santisima Trinidad, had four decks, and mounted one hundred and thirty guns: it was the largest ship which at that time existed in the world. But the Spanish crews were for the most part raw, untrained, and ill-affected to the service; having been recently raised by a forced conscription of landsmen.

At this juncture Sir John Jervis had been most

seasonably joined by Admiral Parker from England and Commodore Nelson from Elba. On board the ship of Nelson were Sir Gilbert Elliot, the late Viceroy of Corsica, with Colonel Drinkwater and others of his suite; and thus did these gentlemen become spectators of the coming conflict. All together Sir John Jervis could display but fifteen ships of the line; but by a bold manœuvre at the beginning of the action, his fleet passed through the enemy's, cutting off from the latter a division of six ships.

The main brunt of the battle which followed was borne by Commodore Nelson and Captain Collingwood. Nelson most gallantly boarded one of the Spanish eighty-gun ships, the St. Joseph. "Victory or Westminster Abbey!" was his cry, as he rushed forward. Fighting from deck to deck, and aided by Collingwood, he finally prevailed. Thus in a private letter does Collingwood describe the scene:—"The Commodore, on the quarter-deck of a Spanish first-rate, received the submission and the swords of the officers of the two vessels. One of his sailors (William Fearney by name) bundled up the swords with as much composure as he would have made a faggot, though twenty-two sail of their line were still within gun-shot!"[3]

At the close of the action there had struck to our flag, besides the St. Joseph, three Spanish ships of the line, while several others, and among them the San-

[3] Memoirs of Lord Collingwood, vol. i. p. 51; Pettigrew's Life of Nelson, vol. i. p. 94. See also, and above all, James's Naval History, vol. ii. pp. 35–40.

tisima Trinidad, were almost utterly disabled. The Spaniards showed no inclination to renew the battle, but retired during the night to the refuge of Cadiz Bay.

This victory, though not comparable, either in the fierceness of the struggle or the magnitude of the result, to some others at sea that followed it, was yet, so far as regards effect in England, better timed than any. It came as a speck of blue amidst dark clouds—as the one event to cheer us in a season of danger and distress. It was therefore politic as well as just in Pitt to give lustre to the victory, and shower rewards upon the victors. Sir John Jervis was raised not only to the Peerage, but to a high place in it, as Earl St. Vincent, with a pension of 3000*l.* a year. Nelson was knighted and received the Order of the Bath; and there were numerous other promotions.

By land as by sea this year the hostilities were not interrupted by the winter season. The Archduke Charles succeeded in reducing Kehl and the *tête-de-pont* of Hüningen. But in Italy the star of General Bonaparte never waned. Early in January General Alvinzi, at the head of another Austrian army, had advanced to the relief of Mantua. At Rivoli he was met and utterly defeated by the French commander, and Mantua, in consequence, surrendered on the 2nd of the ensuing month. Bonaparte was then free to turn his arms against Pius the Sixth. First reducing Ancona and the districts to the east of the Apennines, he was preparing to cross that chain of mountains and march upon Rome, when the Pope, despairing of relief, submitted to the hard terms that were demanded. By

the Treaty of Tolentino, on the 19th of February, His Holiness formally ceded the greater part of the territories which the French had already seized, and agreed to pay to them a sum upon the whole of thirty-six millions of livres. An eloquent English writer, describing the result at the time, speaks of it as follows: —"If by a late submission, which the Romans call a treaty, the rotten grant of St. Peter's rich domain is yet saved a while from utter ruin, its seals are all torn off and its ornaments effaced."[4]

No sooner was the Papal power humbled than the French chief, ever active and ever victorious, again turned his arms to the north. Marching boldly forward, he invaded the hereditary states of the House of Austria. The Archduke Charles was recalled in haste from the Rhine to defend the approaches of the Danube; but on the 16th of March he was overthrown at the battle of Tagliamento. Other reverses to the Austrians followed; the French still pressed onwards; they were at the foot of the Sömmering Pass, and within a few marches of Vienna. Thus threatened in his very capital, the Emperor gave way, and sent plenipotentiaries to treat with the youthful conqueror. Desirous to conciliate his good will, the Austrians proposed to insert as their first article that the Emperor acknowledged the French Republic. But here the lofty spirit of Bonaparte appeared. "Strike that out!" he cried; "the French Republic is like the sun; he that does not see it is blind!"

[4] Anastasius, by Thomas Hope, vol. iii. p. 373.

On the 18th of April the preliminaries of peace were signed at Leoben. The principal terms were the cession of Belgium to France and the extension of its frontier to the Rhine, on condition that the definitive treaty should provide fitting indemnity for the Emperor elsewhere.

The real meaning of this last condition was levelled at the Republic of Venice. It may seem surprising that her territories should thus be parcelled out by France and Austria when neither of these Powers had as yet declared war against her. But General Bonaparte was fully resolved upon her overthrow. He had several grievances, some just, others only colourable, against the faltering chiefs of that decrepit state. For a long time they had wavered between their dread and their dislike of him. But when they saw him far removed from their own frontiers, and involved, as they thought, in the fastnesses of the Austrian mountains, they allowed the latter feeling in some measure to have sway. They made—or, what in this case amounts to the same thing, they were accused of making—some feeble preparations to assail him in the rear. The news of his victorious return and of his indignant language made their very souls die within them. They offered no defence; but, convening an extraordinary Senate, agreed to a vote that their own government was unsuited to times and circumstances. Not even a single sword was drawn in behalf of the long-decayed Republic. With so much of ignominy ended a career, in part so glorious, of thirteen hundred years!

The conclusion of the preliminaries of Leoben left

England to wage the contest single-handed. Not a single ally of importance or of active co-operation remained to her upon the Continent. States such as Holland and Spain, that were ranged upon her side at the commencement of the war, had now taken part against her, and become mere instruments in the hands of that Great Republic, so formidable an adversary even while it stood alone.

While thus upon the Continent of Europe the cause of England was in no common measure overcast and lowering, our prospects at home were, if possible, more gloomy still. The darkest, the most perilous hour to us of the entire war had now arrived; the hour when we were threatened with the loss both of our financial credit and of our maritime supremacy; first by a suspension of the Bank, and next by a mutiny of the Fleet.

The drain upon the Bank had been for some time past increasing. There was a large export of bullion in subsidies and loans to Foreign Powers. There were payments for the freights and cargoes of neutral ships which had been seized, and for which compensation was demanded. There were advances to Government amounting at last, with arrears of interest, to ten millions and a half sterling. There was a further advance in contemplation of a million and a half, required for the service of Ireland. Already, so far back as October, 1795, the price of gold had risen from 3*l.* 17*s.* 10*d.*, as estimated in the coinage, to 4*l.* 4*s.* the ounce.[5] Still, however, so high was the credit of the

[5] See Macpherson's Annals of Commerce, vol. iv. p. 407.

Bank, and so flourishing the state of its own resources, that it might probably have borne even these accumulated burthens. But at this very period came the alarm of a French invasion. Under this alarm many persons withdrew in haste their deposits from the country banks; and these—some already insolvent, and many more threatened with insolvency—withdrew in their turn their deposits from the Bank of England. In the last ten days of February the great pressure came. It was found that the demands for cash in the preceding week were far greater than they had ever been in an equal period. Day by day they most rapidly increased. The Directors, in dire perplexity, addressed themselves to Pitt for counsel and guidance. Nothing but a most energetic determination on the part of the Executive Government could have saved the Bank, or, in its train, the State, from insolvency.

Pitt did not hesitate or falter. He applied to the King, and prevailed upon His Majesty to come at once to town, and, considering the emergency, to hold a Council at St. James's on Sunday. This was the 26th of February. Then was framed and issued an Order in Council, of which the opening words declared it to be, by the unanimous opinion of the Board, indispensably necessary for the public service. It prohibited the Directors of the Bank from issuing any cash in payment until the sense of Parliament could be taken and measures be adopted for maintaining the means of circulation.

This bold step—to sacrifice a part, lest the whole should perish—would have been as nothing, or as worse than

nothing, had it not been well supported. A meeting of the merchants of London was immediately summoned, and held next day at noon in Guildhall, the Lord Mayor presiding. They resolved unanimously that they would accept bank-notes in any payment which they had to receive, and tender bank-notes in any payment which they had to make. A Resolution to this effect was signed by all the persons present; and so effectual was this measure in supporting public credit, that the Funds, far from falling, rose that afternoon no less than two per cent.

On that same Monday, the 27th, at the meeting of both Houses, a message from the King was presented, transmitting the Order in Council, and recommending this most important subject to the immediate attention of Parliament. Pitt gave notice that next day he should move for a Secret Committee, chosen by ballot, to investigate the outstanding engagements and resources of the Bank, expressing, at the same time, his firm opinion that the resources would be found most ample, and much more than adequate to meet the engagements. He should also propose to declare, by a vote of the House, that notes instead of cash would, for a limited time, be received in all pecuniary transactions.

It might, perhaps, be expected by some philosopher in his closet, ignorant of this world's affairs, that at this most momentous crisis, when the financial credit of the country hung wavering in the balance, the gentlemen in Opposition should have, though but for a week, though but for a day, suspended their party resentments. It might be expected that they should

show themselves still more desirous to sustain the State than to overthrow the Administration. Yet the ardour of political contention is at all times and in every party hard to be relinquished. We can trace that ardour but too clearly in the votes and speeches of this period. We find amendments moved and divisions taken on every possible occasion. We find invectives of Pitt without stint, measure, or reserve. We find denunciations of the course pursued, and at the same time no suggestion of any other. "This alarming proposition," said Fox, so early as the 27th, "might even put an end to our existence as a powerful nation." "The Minister," he added, next day, "has issued a Proclamation to destroy the public credit of the country. Year by year he has amused us with ideas of the finances of France—as now on the verge, now in the gulf of bankruptcy. But while thus amusing the country, he has led it to the very same verge, ay, into the very same gulf." Sheridan and some other Members were eager in predicting that, as the *Assignats* in France had now become waste paper, so would, ere long, the bank-notes of England. To the same effect in the other House spoke the Marquis of Lansdowne: "Mark my prophecy, my Lords," he said. "If you attempt to make bank-notes a legal tender, their credit will perish. This is not matter of conjecture, but of experience. A fever is as much a fever in London as in Paris or Amsterdam, and the stoppage of payment must be the same in whatever country it shall happen."

Happily for England in this emergency, as in many others, the middle classes evinced far more of spirit

and of foresight than some of the statesmen by profession. In London, those merchants and bankers who had not attended the meeting at the Mansion House hastened to subscribe the Resolution which was there agreed to, so that in a few days the number of signatures was upwards of three thousand. Their patriotic example was followed by the members of the Privy Council, and of other public bodies; and through the public confidence thus manifested, all the current pecuniary transactions could proceed without disturbance. Still further was the public confidence increased when the Committees appointed by both Houses to examine the affairs of the Bank presented their Reports. It then appeared that on deducting the liabilities, there remained to the Bank, exclusive of their debt from Government of nearly 12,000,000*l.*, a clear surplus of 3,800,000*l.* At the same time it was recommended that the measures already taken should be continued and confirmed.

To establish a currency for smaller sums while the payments in gold were suspended, the Bank issued notes of one and two pounds each. To supply more silver without the delay of coinage, the Directors devised a new expedient. They stamped a miniature impression of the King's head on a large number of Spanish dollars, which they issued at the rate of four shillings and ninepence. But it was not long ere these stamps came to be counterfeited, and it was necessary to withdraw the first issue in the October following, even at considerable loss.[6]

In the Commons, on the 9th of March, Pitt moved to

[6] Macpherson's Annals of Commerce, vol. iv. p. 415.

bring in a Bill to indemnify the Governor and Company of the Bank for any acts done by them in pursuance of the Order in Council. By that Bill, which did not pass into a law until the beginning of May, they were formally prohibited from issuing cash in payments except in sums under twenty shillings, and restricted from advancing to the Treasury any sum exceeding 600,000*l.*, until cash payments should be resumed. It was enacted that these restrictions should not extend beyond the 24th of June; but as that day approached an enlargement of time to the next Session was felt to be necessary, and was made. And though statesmen and Parliament continued to flatter themselves with hopes that they were providing only for a short emergency, and that cash payments might be speedily resumed, yet as time elapsed it was found to be more and more difficult to resume them, and in fact they were not resumed for years after the final close of the European war. Their resumption was founded only on Mr. Peel's Committee of 1818 and his Act of the ensuing year—not the least of the many great services rendered to his country by that eminent man.

It was this first cessation of cash payments that gave rise to a clever epigram on Mr. Pitt:—

"Of Augustus and Rome
The poets still warble,
How he found it of brick
And left it of marble.

So of Pitt and of England
Men may say without vapour,
That he found it of gold
And left it of paper."

I may observe, however, that this conceit is not original; it only puts into verse a note to the *Pursuits of Literature.*[7]

It is worthy of note that the system of inconvertible paper money ceased in France at almost the very period when it began in England. In the course of 1796 the *Assignats* became reduced to the value of waste paper, and the *Mandats,* which were intended to supply their place, quickly shared their fate. Thus of necessity there was a recurrence in all payments to the precious metals; a recurrence first in practice, and soon afterwards in law.

It must be owned, however, that so long as the war continued, the system of inconvertible paper money did good service in England. Expanding precisely in proportion to the exigencies of the public service, and supported by an undeviating reliance on the national good faith, it enabled us, as certainly no other system could, to raise year by year loans of unparalleled amount; to transmit repeated subsidies to Foreign Powers in alliance with us; and to bear without sinking beneath it the burthen of accumulated taxes. It was, in short, a gigantic system of paper credit, giving us power to cope with no less gigantic foes.

The temporary strength derived from an expanded currency was manifested during the month of April in this year. Even after so brief an interval since the last, another loan of eighteen millions was then required, including an advance of a million and a half

[7] See p. 476, ed. 1808.

to Ireland, and of three millions and a half to the Emperor. We have seen that in the previous December the same sum could scarcely have been raised at all without a most earnest appeal to the loyal feelings of the people. Now, on the contrary, the money was obtained without difficulty, though according to the dangers of the country on highly unfavourable terms—at the rate, namely, of 6*l.* 17*s.* per cent. To meet the interest, several new taxes were proposed, one especially of three half-pence on every newspaper, with an increased duty on advertisements.

In reserving so large a sum for the service of the Emperor, Pitt had supposed that the Emperor was resolute to maintain the war. The extreme advocates for war in England were never weary at this juncture in vaunting the Emperor's immovable firmness. Nor were there wanting even in the Cabinet some reflections on the lesser zeal of Mr. Pitt. "One anecdote of the Emperor I cannot forbear mentioning," writes Windham to Burke. "When his courtiers were besieging him with demands for peace, and urging that Vienna must fall, he answered by saying, 'What then? Is Vienna the Empire?' The Emperor and Thugut, however, are the only persons who stand upon that ground. I believe we also have an Emperor here to do the same; but where is the Thugut?"

The letter of Windham from which I have here cited, bore date the 25th of April. On that day a week had already elapsed since the immovable Emperor yielded and the Preliminaries of Peace were signed!

In truth, however, Mr. Pitt was not less zealous than the followers of Burke. He was only more clear-sighted. He was more observant of obstacles, and better prepared for ill-success. We find him on the 28th earnestly press a personal friend to return to the House of Commons for this very question: "It seems very important not to delay for a moment more than is necessary the decision on the Austrian loan. The sending the result to Vienna may be of infinite importance."[8] The money was voted as Pitt desired on the 4th of May; but on the 5th arrived the tidings that dashed his hopes—the tidings of the separate peace.

Amidst all this pressure on the national resources, the House of Commons was not unmindful on other points also of its duty to the Crown. A marriage having been concluded between the Princess Royal and the Hereditary Prince of Würtemberg, there was cheerfully voted a marriage-portion of 80,000*l.*

The mutiny of the Fleet at this very period, and when, as will presently be shown, an invasion from the side of Holland was impending, seemed to threaten not only the well-being and prosperity, but the very existence of England as an independent state. For some time past discontents had prevailed among the seamen. There had been no increase either of their pay or of the Greenwich pensions since the reign of Charles the Second, while the necessaries of life had risen at least 30 per cent. in price, so that the effect upon them was equivalent to a large reduction. There were

[8] Pitt to Wilberforce, April 28, 1797.

complaints of the unequal distribution of prize-money, which by its rules gave almost everything to the chiefs, and left the merest pittance to the petty officers and crews. There were complaints, I fear but too justly founded, of harsh and tyrannical conduct in some of the Admirals and Captains.

Of all the naval chiefs at this time, the one who enjoyed the highest popularity was the veteran Earl Howe. The seamen were proud of his exploits and their own on the memorable "First of June," and they talked of him among themselves affectionately as "Black Dick." Lord Howe was still nominally at the head of the Channel Fleet, but he was seventy-two years of age. Lord Bridport commanded under him, and Lord Howe himself had gone to Bath to recruit his health. It was at Bath that, at the beginning of March, he received four letters, not signed, but purporting to come from the seamen of the four principal ships at Portsmouth; his own flag-ship, the Queen Charlotte, among the rest. These letters pointed out that both the Army and Militia had lately received an increase of their allowances, and they asked his Lordship, as "the seaman's friend," to intercede at the Admiralty, and obtain a similar favour for the naval service. Lord Howe transmitted these four letters (three of which appeared to be in the same handwriting) to Lord Spencer, and wrote upon the subject both to Sir Peter Parker, the Admiral at Portsmouth, and to Lord Bridport, the commander of the Channel Fleet. Both these chiefs in their replies treated the matter as of no importance, as probably the work of

some one ill-disposed person. It is not easy on this occasion to acquit some Admirals in active service from the charge of either gross ignorance or gross unconcern as regards the wants and wishes of their men.

No public notice accordingly was taken of these anonymous communications; and the Lords of the Admiralty remained in a state of profound security. But on the 12th of April they were addressed by Sir Peter Parker in a far different tone. He had received intelligence, he said, of a concerted scheme for the crews of the Channel fleet to seize the ships and supersede the officers until their grievances should be redressed; and that the 16th of the month was fixed upon as the day for the execution of this project. Active service seemed to be the surest antidote for sullen discontent. An order was instantly sent down to Portsmouth by telegraph for the Channel fleet to put to sea. Judicious as this measure seemed, it did not prevent, it only hastened the intended outbreak. No sooner had Lord Bridport made the signal to prepare for sailing than the seamen on board his own ship, the Queen Charlotte, ran up the rigging and raised three cheers of defiance. Their example was followed, and their cheer re-echoed from the other ships of war. So unanimous were they, that they carried their purpose into effect with the utmost ease. They took all command from the officers, sending several whom they accused of oppression on shore, and keeping the others on board as hostages and prisoners. Scarce any insult was offered, and not a drop of blood

was spilt. For their government, two "delegates" (for such was the name they bore) were chosen in each ship, and sent on board the Queen Charlotte, where they held their sittings in the Admiral's state-cabin.

The delegates, thirty-two in number, sought in the first place to establish their own authority. They required every seaman in their ships to take an oath of fidelity to them and to the fleet in general; and this ceremony was accomplished in two days. Meanwhile they prepared a petition to the Board of Admiralty and to the House of Commons, and framed a list of rules for the government of the ships under their control. Perhaps no men raised to power by a successful mutiny ever showed so much of temper and moderation. Their petition was neither exorbitant in its demands, nor yet disrespectful in its tone. Besides the smallness of their allowances as contrasted with those of the Army and Militiamen, to whom, as they said, they were not inferior in loyalty and zeal, they complained of the deficient weight and measure of their provisions; of the scanty care of them when sick; of the stoppage of their pay when wounded; and of their prolonged detention on board when in harbour.

In the rules which they framed they did their best to maintain a right discipline. They enjoined proper returns of watch, and strict obedience to command; they prohibited the introduction of spirits in the ships, and the rambling of the sailors on shore.

One rule may perhaps remind the reader of the fable of the Lion's Den: "No woman shall be per-

mitted to go on shore from any ship, but as many may come in as please."[9]

By this time, however, the Government in London was thoroughly roused. Lord Spencer, attended by two of the Junior Lords, hastened down to Portsmouth, and there held a Board of Admiralty. There also he conferred with some of our best Admirals on shore. All agreed that both in justice and in policy the demands of the mutineers ought in great part at least to be complied with. By instructions from the Government, accordingly, three of the Admirals, namely, Gardner, Colpoys, and Pole, were sent on board the Queen Charlotte to confer with the delegates. They came fully authorised to offer a large increase both in pay and in provisions, and required the seamen forthwith to return to their duty. But the delegates answered that the crews would agree to nothing unless the offer were sanctioned by Parliament and guaranteed by a Royal Proclamation. Incensed at this reply, Admiral Gardner, a man of hot temper, lost all self-control. He seized one of the delegates by the collar, and swore that he would have them all hanged, with every fifth man throughout the fleet!

This ill-timed sally of passion proved nearly fatal to Admiral Gardner himself. It proved nearly fatal also to the entire negotiation. The conferences were at once broken off. Lord Bridport, who had hitherto remained on board the Queen Charlotte, struck his

[9] For these Rules given at length see the Collection of Papers laid before Parliament relating to the Mutiny (Ann. Regist. 1797, pp. 238-256).

flag and left the ship. Lord Spencer and his colleagues returned to London. On the other hand the mutineers ordered a regular watch as when at sea, loaded the guns, and hoisted a blood-red flag. It appears that they intended the latter as only a signal among themselves, but the King's officers, who knew it as the common emblem of piracy, looked on it with alarm as the probable forerunner of some dreadful outrages.

Yet in one or two days more the angry feelings subsided. Lord Bridport received authority to renew the late offers with a more conciliatory form and a larger amount of concession. The delegates wrote to the Admiralty, declaring that with hearts full of gratitude and joy they received the bountiful augmentation of pay and provisions which was designed them. They wrote also to Lord Bridport, whom they styled their father and friend. Preliminaries being thus adjusted, Lord Bridport returned to his ship; once more bade his flag be hoisted; and addressed his men with much effect in the tone of an afflicted father, assuring them that he had brought a redress of their grievances. It was found, in fact, that the new proposals of which he was the bearer comprised substantially all that had been asked. One point only remained. The delegates refused to take the promise of the Board for the full pardon, and insisted on seeing it in the King's own name. This point also had to be conceded. His Majesty was applied to for his Sign Manual to a Proclamation, which was sent down to Portsmouth, read aloud in the several ships, and received with applauding

cheers. Then, and then only, did the delegates disperse; the ensigns of revolt were struck down; and the crews declared themselves ready to yield due obedience to their officers. The first use made of this recovered authority was to move the greater part of the fleet from Portsmouth to St. Helen's.[1]

Besides the humiliation (certainly in this case no small one), it was no light sacrifice to which the nation here submitted. According to the estimate which Pitt laid before the House of Commons on the 5th of May, it became necessary to provide for the intended augmentation of allowances an annual expense of 536,000*l.*, although for the current year, on account of the months already elapsed, only the sum of 372,000*l.* was required. Pitt rose, he said, with great embarrassment. Explanations might justly be expected, but, from every view of prudence and policy, he should rather rely on and even claim the silent indulgence of the House than enter into any detail.

The appeal was made in vain. Fox and Sheridan would not relinquish, nor even for a day postpone, their invective against the Ministers. "Conciliation," said Sheridan, "would be more effectual if accompanied with a vote of censure on their delay." When, however, on the 9th Pitt brought in a Bill for increasing the pay and allowances to seamen, it was passed through all its stages at one sitting; and, being transmitted to the Lords, went through their House with equal speed.

[1] See the narrative of the Mutiny in the Annual Register (not in this case Dodsley's, but Rivington's rival series), part ii. pp. 140–159.

Next day the vote of censure which had been threatened by Sheridan was actually moved by Whitbread and seconded by Fox, but at the close of the debate they could muster only 63 votes against 237.

During this time, unhappily, the revolt of the Channel fleet broke forth anew. So easy and so complete had been the triumph of the mutineers, that on looking back to it they could scarcely convince themselves of its reality. They thought that the promises made them would not be fulfilled. They misconstrued into grounds of suspicion the most trivial circumstances that arose, and the slightest delays that intervened. Above all, they resented a Circular Order from the Admiralty of the 1st of May, enjoining "a proper subordination and discipline," and directing "that the Captains and Commanders be ready on the first appearance of mutiny to use the most vigorous means to suppress it, and to bring the ring-leaders to punishment." This Order, though designed only for future regulation, might yet to jealous eyes seem to bear a retrospective sense. Under these circumstances, on the 7th of May mutiny broke forth once more in all the ships at St. Helen's. Once more the crews quietly deposed their officers, and named delegates in their stead. At the same time they despatched some of their body to visit the two ships, the London and the Marlborough, which had remained at Portsmouth. Admiral Colpoys, who commanded on board the London, acted in conformity to his last instructions. He refused to admit the delegates, ordering the officers to be armed, the marines to be in readiness, and the ports to be let down. On the other hand, the

seamen of the London, having consulted together, determined that the delegates should be received. The officers stood firm, and ordered the men to go below. Some men refused; one man began to unlash a gun. The First Lieutenant, Bover by name, after giving him a caution, which was disregarded, drew out a pistol and shot him dead.

This act was the signal for open mutiny. The seamen rushed upon the officers and overpowered them, while the marines, far from aiding the latter, took part with the mutineers. They were next proceeding to hang Lieutenant Bover upon the rigging, and it was only through the strenuous entreaties of the chaplain and surgeon, together with the interposition of the Admiral, who declared that this officer had merely acted as he was bound in obedience to instructions, that his life was spared. In like manner the seamen of the Marlborough rose against their Captain, and the two ships, then weighing anchor, joined the rest of the fleet at St. Helen's.

Yet even at the height of this successful mutiny there was one incident to show the moderation and public spirit of the mutineers. It was believed that the seamen in one of the ships at St. Helen's talked openly among themselves of conveying her to France and giving her over to the enemy. This idea was thought to be not spontaneous, but rather derived from certain persons on land. But no sooner did the delegates hear of it than they expressed the highest indignation. They threatened to fire upon and sink that ship if such language were continued, and they stationed guard-boats around

her both by day and night, so as to prevent any further communication with the shore.

To quell this second mutiny the Ministers relied on the prudence and popularity of Earl Howe. On the 11th he went down in all haste to Portsmouth, bearing with him a full pardon from the King, and the Act of Parliament which had been passed in a single day. He had resolved to go on board every one of the revolted line-of-battle ships and to confer in person with the delegates and crews. Everywhere he found himself received with affectionate respect, and heard with deferential attention. So far had he wrought upon them in the space of two days that they consented to express in general terms their contrition for what had passed. They were willing also that the removal of unpopular officers on which they had determined should appear not as a condition to be stipulated, but as a favour to be asked. On the 13th Earl Howe, on board the Royal William, received in state the petitions of the men, and having declared them granted in virtue of his full powers, the mutiny was concluded and discipline restored. He had the great mortification to see Admiral Colpoys, four Post Captains, and nearly one hundred officers of less rank, displaced from command and consigned to inactivity, at the call of those whom they had ruled, though still retained by the Government on full pay. But on the other hand he beheld with delight the fleet in general resume the King's authority and return to active service. Except a slight affray, caused by four drunken sailors, who went on shore and were apprehended for rape and robbery, there was no renewal of

tumult. The men appear to have done their duty with the same exactness as before; and, soon weighing anchor, the fleet sailed to its appointed station, to cruise off the coast of Brittany.

So far then as regards the Channel fleet the mutiny seems to have left no ill traces behind. It had dealt only with practical and pressing grievances; it had put forth no mere theoretical pretensions. Yet even thus the precedent of a victorious insurrection could not pass away without considerable danger. It was an evil seed that struck root elsewhere. On the 11th of May, at the very time when Lord Howe was hastening down to quell the mutiny in the ships at St. Helen's, a new mutiny broke out in the ships at Sheerness. Here also, in the course of a few days, the men with perfect ease overpowered and deposed the officers. For the management of each ship they formed a body of twelve, which they termed a Committee of Vigilance, and for the conduct of the whole they appointed a Committee of Delegates.

But this new revolt essentially differed from the former. It had been fomented by seditious hand-bills —the same as had been lately, though without success, distributed among the soldiers.[2] It looked to speculative rather than practical wrongs. It was tainted by the political spirit of the times. Finally it was made subservient to the personal ambition of one man. This was Richard Parker, a man in no common degree bold

[2] See on this point the statement of Mr. Pitt in the Parl. Hist., vol. xxxiii. p. 806.

and active, who had received a more careful—let me not say a better—education than his fellows. He was a native of Devonshire, and had been a tradesman in Scotland; but, being imprisoned in Perth gaol for debt, enlisted as a naval volunteer. In the course of these vicissitudes he had become deeply imbued with the levelling principles of France. Being placed at the head of the delegates, he assumed the title of their President, sometimes also, as the mutiny proceeded, being called Rear-Admiral Parker. By his direction they took, as it were, possession of Sheerness, holding their deliberations at a tavern, and parading the town with music and banners and every mark of triumph. Meanwhile no seaman was permitted to leave his ship without a passport, which, by a strange perversion of language, was termed "a liberty ticket."

Nor, indeed, did the delegates themselves remain many days at Sheerness. They deemed it more prudent both to concentrate their force and to place it beyond reach of the batteries on shore. With this view they moved the ships to the Nore. There they held their meetings in the state-cabin of the Sandwich, of ninety guns, lately the flag-ship of Vice-Admiral Charles Buckner, who was the commander of this fleet.

The account of this fresh mutiny was received in London with equal concern and surprise. It had been hoped that the late concessions, ratified as they had been by an Act of Parliament, had not only allayed sedition, but expelled what Lord Bacon terms the matter of sedition. It was therefore anxiously inquired what other terms the new mutineers demanded. At first

there was no clue beyond a paper entitled an Appeal to the Nation, which was industriously circulated through the fleet. It purported to come from the sailors in Lord Bridport's fleet, but, from the style, was plainly the work of some disaffected landsman, who did not scruple at the most malicious falsehoods. Thus it asserted as a positive and undoubted fact, that, notwithstanding the free pardon granted by the King, it was the intention of the Ministers, after a brief interval, to select and send to execution those seamen who had been prominent in the late proceedings. Indeed it was alleged that the selection was already made.[3]

On the 20th of May the delegates of the new mutiny spoke for themselves. Sitting in the state-cabin of the Sandwich, they sent through Admiral Buckner a written statement of their claims. But here again the very first article showed under what gross misrepresentations they had acted. For in that article they asked, "That every indulgence granted to the fleet at Portsmouth be granted to His Majesty's subjects serving in the fleet at the Nore." Now on this point there had never been the smallest doubt or hesitation in the Government or in any of those whom it employed; and the late Act of Parliament had declared in most explicit terms that these indulgences should extend to all seamen and marines in the Royal Service. It is quite plain that concealed behind the mutineers and urging them onwards there were much worse men than themselves.

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[3] See an account of this publication in Mr. Sheridan's fair and upright speech of the 19th of May. Parl. Hist. vol. xxxiii. p. 639.

Unhappily the other articles transmitted from the Sandwich were not so easy of solution. They were found to be for the most part extravagant and inadmissible. Thus they required that no officer who had been turned out of any ship should be employed again in the same ship without the consent of the ship's company. Thus again they required that of the Articles of War some should be expunged and all revised. And it was necessary to consider also the form of these requests. It was no longer, as from Portsmouth, a respectful petition. It was an imperious statement of demands. We find it in conclusion state that they (the delegates) "have unanimously agreed that they will not deliver up their charge until the appearance of some of the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to ratify the same."

Under these circumstances, the Lords replied on the 22nd to the effect that ample concessions had been already made—that no further ones could be admitted—and that, although their Lordships had thought proper to go down to Portsmouth, they saw no reason for a similar step on the present occasion. But they offered to the men in mutiny "His Majesty's most gracious pardon; and their Lordships' order to all officers to bury in oblivion all that has passed."

This offer of clemency was transmitted through Admiral Buckner. Being unheeded by the mutineers, it was renewed on the 24th. The Admiral went himself on board the Sandwich to bring the delegates to a sense of their duty. He was received without any of the honours beseeming his rank, and

he came back without the smallest result from his endeavours. At his departure the mutineers struck his flag, which they had hitherto forborne to do, and hoisted in all the ships the blood-red flag of piracy. And on the 25th they addressed a written answer to the overtures of the Admiralty. "The determination of the whole," says Richard Parker, who signs as President, "is that they will not come to any accommodation until you appear at the Nore and redress our grievances."

The mutineers did not confine themselves to emblems or to words alone. They seized or they fired upon several ships which had hitherto remained loyal to the King, and compelled the crews to take part in the revolt. Among these was the San Fiorenzo, frigate, which had been made ready to convey the Prince of Würtemberg and his bride to Germany. There was a return of their fire from the fort at Tilbury. There was a commencement of revolt in the artillery at Woolwich. But, worst of all, they were joined by the greater part of Admiral Duncan's fleet. That fleet had been blockading the ports of Holland, in which an invasion of this country was actively preparing. The heart of our Admiral—brave as it was, and long tried—sank within him when he found himself one morning forsaken by his entire armament, except only his own ship and one other, the Venerable and the Adamant. He called his men together on the quarter-deck, and made them a touching address, which is still recorded. "It has often been my pride," he said, "with you to look into the Texel and see a foe who dreaded coming

out to meet us; my pride is now humbled indeed."[4] With excellent skill the Admiral caused repeated signals to be made as if the main body of his fleet were still in the offing. By this device, which was observed from the shore, the Dutch chiefs were completely deceived. They were kept in ignorance of the desertion that Duncan had sustained. But had they known the real truth, or had they been able at that period to set sail and issue forth, they would have found Old England undefended by her wooden walls, and open on every side to her assailants.

Nor was it only of the fleet that fears were entertained. With equal zeal had seditious hand-bills been disseminated through the army. Wilberforce has noted in his Diary of the 28th of May: "Daily reports of the soldiery rising; and certainly some progress made (in corrupting them.)"

Still more precise is the statement of Sir Charles Cunningham, a Captain of one of the King's ships. He declares that the inflammatory hand-bills sent on shore had wrought upon the Invalids, the only force then stationed at Sheerness. When elevated with liquor, "which," says Sir Charles, "generally happened every evening," they were heard to express their opinion that they also had a right to have delegates.[5]

No crisis so alarming, or nearly so alarming, has ever been known in England since the Revolution of 1688. One night the Ministers were roused from their

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[4] Ann. Regist. 1797, part i. p. 214.

[5] Narrative of the Mutiny, p. 17, as privately printed, 1829.

slumbers by the booming of the distant cannon, and had to meet in council before day-break. This we learn from an entry in Mr. Wilberforce's private journal, dated the 26th of May: "Pitt waked by Woolwich artillery riot, and went out to Cabinet." Yet, feeling how much at this juncture depended on himself, he allowed no sign of discomposure to escape him; and he maintained throughout, what Lord Macaulay describes at another period as "his usual majestic self-possession." [6]

One strong instance of Pitt's calmness, at a time when all around him shook, was wont to be related by the First Lord of the Admiralty at that period. On a subsequent night there had come from the fleet tidings of especial urgency. Lord Spencer thought it requisite to go at once to Downing Street and consult the Prime Minister. Pitt being roused from his slumbers, sat up in bed, heard the case, and gave his instructions. Lord Spencer took leave and withdrew. But no sooner had he reached the end of the street than he remembered one more point which he had omitted to state. Accordingly he returned to Pitt's house, and desired to be shown up a second time to Pitt's chamber. There after so brief an interval he found Pitt as before, buried in profound repose.

Another slight incident from the same circle of private life will perhaps portray more vividly than could any elaborate description, how very far from such calmness and composure was the public mind at that period. When earlier in the month of May Mr.

[6] Biographies, p. 225, ed. 1860.

Wilberforce announced his matrimonial engagement to Miss Spooner, "it was remarked by those who knew him best as an instance of his confidence in God, that at such a time of general apprehension he should have resolved to marry." [7]

The same feeling of alarm was manifested in all the public transactions of this period. Thus in the course of May the Three per Cents. fell to the extreme depression of 48.

It was at this most critical period that Fox and his chief friends in the House of Commons deemed it not inconsistent with their sense of right to give a Parliamentary expression to the discontents by announcing in solemn terms their intended retirement from public affairs. The first step was to bring forward on the 26th, through Mr. Grey, a motion for Parliamentary Reform. Both Grey who began, and Fox who concluded the debate, spoke at length and most ably; as did also Sheridan, and a new accession to the House, Sir Francis Burdett. With equal ability was the grave and warning voice of Pitt raised against them. It is striking to observe how little the argument of practical grievance had as yet been urged. Pitt in his speech found himself able to allege that "it never was contended that the interests of Yorkshire were neglected because it sent only two Members to Parliament, or that Birmingham and Manchester have experienced any ill consequences from having no representative." [8]

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[7] Life of Wilberforce, by his Sons, vol. ii. p. 215.
[8] Parl. Hist., vol. xxxiii. p. 681.

Perhaps it may be thought that the real and actual grievance had not been long felt before it came to be redressed.

The main points of interest in this debate were, however, the personal declarations of Fox and Grey. Both disclaimed the idea of an entire and absolute secession. Grey said that he should still be ready to vote, but should not probably after that night desire to trouble the House with any observations. And Fox added on his own part: "I certainly do think that I may devote more of my time to my private pursuits and to the retirement which I love than I have hitherto done. I certainly do think that I need not devote much of it in this House to fruitless exertions and to idle talk." These announcements were made on the supposition that the motion for Reform of Parliament would be again, and by a large majority, rejected. And so it proved. In the division Grey found himself supported by 91 Members, but opposed by no less than 256.

Such announcements to forsake the Parliamentary career as fruitless, and to despair in effect of all beneficial legislation, were, to say the least of them, ill-fitted to serve the cause of order. Yet that cause was at this very time in most imminent peril at the Nore. We have seen that in their letter to the mutineers the Lords of the Admiralty had declared that they would not go to Sheerness. In reply the mutineers had insisted that they should. To give way to this demand was certainly no slight surrender of rightful dignity. But the Ministers, seeing that it would be necessary to make a stand on

the essential questions, resolved to avoid all controversy on points of form. Accordingly on the 29th, Earl Spencer and two of the Junior Lords having repaired to Sheerness and held a Board at the house of Commissioner Hartwell, they were met by Richard Parker with twelve of his brother delegates. The result was by no means satisfactory. The tone of Parker was rude and insolent. Thus when Lord Spencer mentioned the opinion of the Cabinet, Parker told him to go and "consult the ring-leaders of your gang!"[9] In substance the delegates were unbending; they would not recede from the terms they had required, and they spurned the offer of pardon and oblivion made in pursuance of a new Royal Proclamation.

Thus failing in their hopes of adjustment, the Lords of the Admiralty returned to London, and the delegates on board their ships. It was at this very time that the mutineers at the Nore were both reinforced and emboldened by the arrival of the greater part of Admiral Duncan's fleet. That junction raised their force to twenty-four sail. It also raised their presumption to such a pitch, that they proceeded to blockade the mouth of the Thames; for that object mooring four vessels at equal distances from shore to shore. Fertile as England has ever been in sinister predictions, was ever yet so sinister a prediction made? Had it ever formed part of even the most dismal forebodings that our wooden walls should be turned as instruments of

[9] Narrative of the Mutiny in the Annual Register (Rivington's), part ii. p. 143.

siege against us; and that the English capital should be held in check by English sailors?

Nor was it thought that the mutineers would rest satisfied with their blockade. Divers attacks were apprehended. The people of Sheerness, expecting a bombardment, fled in great numbers from the town, or at least sent away their wives and families. London itself was scarcely deemed secure. But the Ministers were determined at all hazards to stand firm. They felt that they had already carried concession to its utmost limits. At Portsmouth they had granted to the seamen everything that they could rightly grant. At Sheerness they had shown themselves willing to waive every question of form, to remit every question of punishment. Better now perish than further yield, since to yield would only be to perish in another form. Troops were summoned in all haste to London. Detachments were sent to Sheerness, and along both banks of the Thames. The ships that had remained loyal were made ready. A flotilla of gunboats was fitted out. For the manning of these ships and boats both officers and sailors were invited to present themselves; and present themselves they did in considerable numbers. All the buoys and beacons which point out the passes through the sand-banks at the mouth of the Thames were most carefully removed. In short, it may be asserted that every measure was taken for active resistance as though the French invaders were at hand.

Nor was the action of Parliament neglected. On the 1st of June a Message from the King was delivered to

both Houses. His Majesty lamented that the crews at the Nore were still persisting in their mutiny, and called upon Parliament to make more effectual provision against such treasonable practices. Next day loyal Addresses in reply were moved and carried. Fox and his closest friends were absent, but Sheridan cordially expressed, as he had once already, those sentiments which at such a juncture any statesman of any party might have been expected to hold.[1] Then Pitt brought in two Bills—the one for inflicting severe penalties on all attempts to excite sedition and mutiny in His Majesty's Service—the other for restraining on the pains of felony any intercourse with the ships at that time in revolt. Both these Bills passed rapidly through their several stages and received the Royal Assent. Thus was manifested in the clearest manner the resolute firmness of both the Administration and the Parliament.

The use of the King's name in the Message to both Houses was certainly productive of good effect. Only three days afterwards came the King's birthday, the 4th of June. Then was it plainly seen that the old spirit of loyalty had only slumbered; that it had by no means died away in the hearts of British seamen. On that day every ship engaged in the revolt, except only the Sandwich, lowered the red flag and hoisted the Royal colours, while at the same time they fired a Royal salute. The single exception of the Sandwich

[1] See the Parl. Hist., vol. xxxiii. p. 801, and Moore's Life, vol. ii. p. 271, although in the latter the part of Sheridan seems to be a little magnified.

was significant as evincing that this burst of affectionate respect took place against the wish and against the orders of the delegates. This was the first symptom, but each succeeding day seemed to lower the authority of these revolutionary chiefs. The seamen began to feel the arbitrary temper and capricious severity of Parker, and were less and less inclined to worship the brazen image that they had made.

Parker used every effort to keep up the delusion among his men. As one expedient that he hit upon, he exhibited the effigies of Pitt and Dundas at the foreyard arm of several of the ships, as marks to be fired at. This was done as he desired early in the morning of the 7th of June; and produced no small consternation at Sheerness, where the sounds were heard, and where it was commonly believed that some of the officers on board were undergoing a real execution.[2]

Nevertheless at this very time the delegates themselves showed some signs of wavering. They summoned to their state-cabin in the Sandwich one of the Captains, the Earl of Northesk, who at the outbreak of the mutiny had been detained as a prisoner on board his ship. On appearing before them, Parker, as the President, desired him to convey to London a letter to the King, and a renewed statement of the terms on which alone they would consent to give up the ships. Lord Northesk undertook the mission, telling them, however, that he expected no good effect from it. In

[2] Narrative of the Mutiny, by Sir Charles Cunningham, p. 72.

London he was introduced by Lord Spencer to the King, but was directed to inform the mutineers that no terms with them would be made; that their repentance and unconditional submission were now required.

Besides the discouragement which this reply produced among the sailors, there were also other causes that conduced to the same end. There was an Address to them from the fleet at Plymouth, and another from the fleet at Spithead, calling upon them to return to their duty, and reprobating their recent conduct as "a scandal to the name of British seamen." By the denial of all intercourse with the shore, they found themselves, to their grievous mortification, treated by the great body of their countrymen as outcasts and as enemies. And besides their natural feelings at this non-communication, they had another and a more substantial reason for regret—their want of water and of fresh provisions. Add to this that from their new masters, the delegates, they underwent day after day a tyranny the more oppressive as upstart and unauthorised.

Of all the ships in revolt, the Repulse and the Leopard were the first to return to their duty. Having cut their cables at the height of the tide, the crews let them drift away from the main body, and sought protection beneath the cannon of Sheerness. Before this retreat could be accomplished, the Repulse was exposed to a heavy fire from the Monarch and Director, two other of the ships in mutiny. Yet it was not long before the Monarch and Director followed her example. In vessel after vessel the revolutionary ensign was lowered, and the rightful authority resumed. By the

13th the red flag had ceased to be displayed in every ship except the Sandwich. Even on the Sandwich the crews rose that day against their self-constituted President, and brought their ship, like the others, under the land batteries. Nor was any resistance offered when Admiral Buckner sent on board a guard of soldiers to arrest Richard Parker and carry him as a prisoner to shore.

Thus, through the vigour and determination of the Government, and by the return of good feeling among the men, was this formidable mutiny quelled almost as rapidly as it had arisen. The ships that belonged to Admiral Duncan's station went back to it; and the blockade of the Dutch fleet was resumed upon equal terms. Throughout the navy the old habits of obedience were re-established with as much security as though they had never been disturbed. In fact it may well excite surprise that after so great a movement, and after also so brief an interval, so few and such slight traces of it should remain. Perhaps this may be in part explained by the reluctance of the naval writers to detail them. So unwilling are they to dwell at all upon this painful subject, that the records of the great mutiny—as it really was seen and felt on board the ships—are among the most scanty and meagre of our recent annals.

There still remained, however, the trial of Parker and of the other delegates. In their case the facts were clear, and admitting of no doubt. They had rejected the King's clemency, and were to become examples of his justice. Parker was the first to be dealt with.

Being tried by a Court Martial, he was found guilty and condemned to death. On the 30th of June he was, by a signal retribution, hanged at the yard-arm of the Sandwich. He met his fate with the greatest courage and composure, asserting to the last that his intentions were upright, and denying that he had any instigators or abettors on shore. A similar sentence was executed on some more of the ring-leaders; others were publicly whipped through the fleet; but the greater number received a respite, and remained for the present in gaol.

CHAPTER XXIV.

1797.

Death of Burke — Renewed negotiation with France — Lord Malmesbury sent to Lille — Talleyrand Minister for Foreign Affairs — Secret negotiation — *Coup d'état* of the Eighteenth of Fructidor — New demands of the French Government — Lord Malmesbury returns to London — Pitt's zeal for peace — Overture from a secret agent for a pecuniary gift to some of the French rulers — Pitt's reply — Death of Eliot — Decline of Pitt's health — His translation from Horace — Treaty of Campo Formio — Projected invasion of Ireland by the Dutch fleet — Death of Hoche — Battle of Camperdown — Meeting of Parliament — Parliamentary seceders — Mr. Tierney — The Budget — New Peerages — Lord Carrington — The Anti-Jacobin.

In the first stages of this great mutiny among the seamen, one at least of the Ministers recurred to the counsels of Burke. Declining in health, and broken in spirits, that great master of politics had early in the spring repaired to Bath, with but faint hopes—perhaps also but faint wishes—of recovery. Mr. Windham had gone to Bath to see him, and there was also Mr. Wilberforce. Let me relate what followed in the very words of the latter. "Monday, April 17. Heard of the Portsmouth mutiny. The only letter which reached Bath that day by the cross post from Portsmouth was one from Captain Bedford, of the Royal Sovereign, to Patty More. She brought it me, and I took it at once to Burke. He could not then see me, but at his desire I called again at two o'clock. The whole scene is now before me. Burke was lying on a sofa, much emaciated; and Wind-

ham, Laurence, and some other friends were round him. The attention shown to Burke by all that party was just like the treatment of Ahithophel of old. 'It was as if one went to inquire of the oracle of the Lord.' I reported to them the account I had received; and Burke being satisfied of its authority, we held a consultation on the proper course for Government to follow. Windham set off for London the same night with the result of our deliberations." From the comments which Wilberforce adds, and which he illustrates at length by another story, we may learn that the advice of Burke was entirely against those concessions to the sailors that nevertheless were made.[1] Eight days later we find Windham write to Burke from London: "The business of the fleet is as well over as such a thing can be; but I am almost inclined to wish the Admiralty had refused to comply."[2]

Meanwhile the health of Burke had not improved. On the 24th of May he left Bath to return to Beaconsfield and die. The last letter from his pen on record bears date the 23rd. On the 21st we find him write to Mrs. Crewe as follows:—"All hopes of any recovery to me from any thing which art or nature can supply being totally at an end, and the fullest trial having been given to these waters without any sort of effect, it is thought advisable that I should be taken home, where, if I shall live much longer, I shall see an end of all that is worth living for in this world." Yet Burke did live

[1] Minutes of Wilberforce's Conversation, as published in his Life, vol. ii. p. 211.

[2] Burke's Correspondence, vol. iv. p. 443.

to be soothed and cheered by the tidings that the mutinies of the seamen were finally quelled. He expired at Beaconsfield on the 9th of July. According to his own directions he was buried in the parish church, in the same grave with his brother and son.[3]

The latter part of this Session (it did not close till the 20th of July) was marked by a patriotic attempt of Wilberforce to enlarge the basis of national defence. As the law then stood, the Roman Catholics were not able to serve in the Militia. They found themselves excluded by the Declaration "I am a Protestant," which each new Militia-man was required to make. Wilberforce now brought in a Bill to omit the obnoxious words. In his own county of York at least he knew that the Roman Catholics were not inferior in loyalty to any of their fellow subjects; and he thought it most impolitic to shut out their services. Pitt gave the measure his support, and it passed the House of Commons. But in the Lords the scene was changed: there it became entangled with a clause including in its provisions the Protestant Dissenters. Bishop Horsley, of Rochester, delivered a violent speech against it; Lord Grenville was not friendly; and the Bill was thrown out. It is said that this affair had nearly caused a dissolution of the friendship between Pitt and Grenville.[4]

Hopes of a general peace were at this time enter-

[3] Life, by Prior, p. 458, ed. 1854. Mrs. Burke continued in the same residence, and survived till 1812. Next year the house was by an accident burnt down.

[4] No record of these debates appears in the Parl. Hist.; but in this case, as in many others, the notes of Mr. Wilberforce (see his Life, vol. ii. p. 222) are of signal service to History.

tained. In his Speech at the close of the Session the King had mentioned the negotiation as in active progress, but of doubtful issue. So early as the 9th of April Pitt had most earnestly represented to the King "the gradual and increasing difficulties of finance." He stated it not as his own opinion only, but as the unanimous opinion of the Cabinet, that the first favourable opportunity should be taken of another overture to France; and that if the claims of the Emperor were once disposed of by his own consent, we should be prepared to leave France in peaceable possession of her conquests—with Belgium as her dominion, and with Holland as her dependency. The King, though with sorrow and reluctance, acquiesced;[5] and the tidings of the Treaty of Leoben coming as they did early in May, added of course a fresh impulse to the pacific wishes of Pitt and his colleagues.

On the 1st of June, therefore, Lord Grenville addressed a letter to M. Delacroix, suggesting that as several obstacles had been removed, the time was favourable to a negotiation. The French Minister at once replied in terms of most ready assent. Subsequently he proposed Lille as the place of negotiation, and sent a passport, with the name in blank, for the English negotiator. But here the haughty spirit of Lord Grenville took deep offence. The passport sent was indeed in an unusual and objectionable form: it purported to be for a person "furnished with the full powers of His Britannic Majesty for concluding and

[5] See in the Appendix an extract of the King's reply, dated April 10, 1797.

signing a definitive and separate treaty of peace." Thus it by anticipation seemed to define and limit the objects of the whole negotiation.

So incensed was Lord Grenville—so positive in putting the worst construction on this point of form, that at a Cabinet held on the 16th he pressed to break off the entire negotiation on this ground. But Pitt was no less resolute upon the other side. "I feel it my duty," he said more than once, "as an English Minister and a Christian, to use every effort to stop so bloody and wasting a war."[6] Windham was not present at that meeting, but Pitt was supported by his other colleagues, and Lord Grenville at last gave way. Still, however, he desired that his dissent from the opinion of his colleagues might be intimated to the King.

Here follows the Draft of those deliberations as drawn up in Mr. Pitt's own writing and as transmitted to His Majesty.

Draft of Cabinet, June 16, 1797.

Present,

Lord Chanc^r., Lord President, Duke of Portland, Earl Spencer, Lord Grenville, Marquis Cornwallis, Mr. Sec^y. Dundas, Mr. Pitt.

It is humbly recommended to Your Majesty that an official note conformable to the accompanying Draft should be transmitted to Paris in answer to the last communication from thence.

Lord Grenville desires to express his dissent.

W. P.

The King made no sign in support of Grenville. No

[6] Malmesbury Papers, vol. iii. p. 369.

letter from His Majesty of that day or upon that subject appears in the Pitt Correspondence. Next morning, therefore, Grenville was under the disagreeable necessity of framing a despatch contrary to his own predilections. In that despatch, addressed to M. Delacroix, he declared the willingness of the English Government to open a negotiation at Lille, and the choice of Lord Malmesbury as the negotiator. He pointed out the objections to the form of the passport, and hoped to receive a new one; adding, in reference to the idea of "a separate negotiation," that the King would be bound to offer terms on behalf of his ally of Portugal.

The reply of M. Delacroix was far from courteous in its tone, though not unsatisfactory in substance. He said that the Directory consented to receive Lord Malmesbury on the part of England, but would have deemed another choice as of happier augury for the speedy conclusion of peace. He gave such assurances as explained away the limitations of the passport; and he added a wish that couriers might not be sent too frequently, since, as he alleged, this frequent despatch had been one main cause of the failure of the late negotiation.

With so ungracious a spirit in M. Delacroix—with so much of decided repugnance in Lord Grenville—it was easy to foresee great obstacles in the way of a conclusion. But Pitt was firm for peace, and on Pitt Lord Malmesbury relied. "Be assured," said the Prime Minister to him as he set out for Lille, "be assured that to produce the desired result I will stifle to the utmost every feeling of pride."[7]

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[7] Malmesbury Papers, vol. iii. p. 369.

On the 3rd of July Lord Malmesbury landed at Calais, and next day proceeded to Lille. There he found awaiting him three Plenipotentiaries on the part of France: first, Le Tourneur, who had been one of the Directors; secondly, Pleville de Pelley, an Admiral in the French navy; and thirdly, Maret, lately returned from an embassy at Naples. All three were gentlemen in mind and manners, frank, and pleasant to deal with. "It is impossible," thus writes Lord Malmesbury at the close of these proceedings, "for any men to have conducted themselves with more cordiality, good humour, and good faith than the whole of the French Legation have done." [8]

At the second conference between them on the 8th of July the English Minister gave in his project for a treaty. England was willing to restore all the conquests which she had made during the war from France and the allies of France, except only the island of Trinidad from the Spaniards, and the Cape of Good Hope from the Dutch. It was further desired, so far as the Dutch were concerned, to obtain their possessions in Ceylon and at Cochin in exchange for Negapatnam, on the coast of Tanjore. There were also some stipulations with regard to the private property of the Prince of Orange, and against any burthensome condition on the Portuguese.

The French Plenipotentiaries took, as was natural, this project to refer to their Government. Meanwhile,

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[8] To Lord Grenville, Sept. 11, 1797.

in pursuance of instructions from Paris, they put in three separate demands:—First, that the title of King of France, which had been borne by the English Sovereign ever since Edward the Third, should be expressly renounced; secondly, that there should be a restitution of, or an equivalent for, the ships taken or destroyed at Toulon; and thirdly, that there should be a clear renunciation of any mortgage upon Belgium in consequence of the loans made to the Emperor from the King of England.

These three new conditions greatly chafed and exasperated Grenville. But Pitt was inclined to take a less unfavourable view. Thus he writes: "I own I am not without some hope that, in one way or another, difficulties on these separate points will not long retard the negotiation, if in other respects an agreement is practicable."[9]

A divergence of the same kind between the two statesmen was shown a few weeks later, when the French Government, in a manner not a little surreptitious, signed a separate peace with the Portuguese Minister at Paris. "You will see by your public instructions," writes Pitt to Malmesbury, "the impression made here by the manner of concluding the Portuguese peace, and still more by the terms. . . . . The preventing us from the full and free use of the Portuguese ports is in itself a point of the utmost practical importance. . . . . On these grounds I feel strongly the necessity of our making a stand, but I

[9] To Lord Malmesbury, July 13, 1797.

own I do not feel as much discouraged by the circumstance as some others."[1]

But at Lille no progress was made. During many weeks the French Plenipotentiaries received no further instructions. They could neither discuss the project of Lord Malmesbury nor yet bring forward, as he asked, a counter-project of their own. It became evident that two adverse parties were in presence at Paris—each preparing to struggle for the mastery, each desirous to cast upon the other the blame of any condescension to the claims of England. The party in favour of the more moderate counsels which had latterly been in the ascendant possessed a majority in both the Chambers, but was opposed by three out of the five Directors. It was difficult, under such circumstances, to foresee how, without a *coup d'état*, either party could prevail.

Even before the end of July there came a change of Ministers. In the place of M. Delacroix, M. Talleyrand, formerly Bishop of Autun, became Minister for Foreign Affairs. In itself the change was of good augury to the friends of peace. M. Delacroix had shown himself formal, captious, and punctilious, with "very much the air of a Bishop," as says Wolfe Tone, with no complimentary intention.[2] The true Bishop, on the contrary, had not only great diplomatic abilities, but also moderate and conciliatory views. Besides

[1] To Lord Malmesbury, August 19, 1797, "alluding to Lord Grenville"—such is Lord Malmesbury's annotation. The Portuguese Minister had far exceeded his instructions, and was subsequently disavowed by his Court.

[2] Journal, February 15, 1796.

M. Maret, who was foremost in his confidence, and Lord Malmesbury, there sprung up at once a most secret negotiation, not divulged to the other French diplomatists nor yet to the whole of the Cabinet in England. Some points of difficulty were, if not adjusted, brought to the verge of adjustment. England might be willing to forego her claim on the Cape if the Dutch would bind themselves not to yield that colony to France. France might be willing to exert her influence over the Court of Madrid and obtain the relinquishment of Trinidad; but still there remained the original obstacle of the impending struggle at Paris, and Talleyrand, as a thorough-paced diplomatist, would not commit himself too far.

At length the storm did burst. The long-apprehended *coup d'état* took place on the 4th of September, or, according to the new calendar, the Eighteenth of Fructidor. Then the majority of the Directors, themselves directed by Barras, issued an order of arrest against two of their colleagues, Barthelemy and Carnot. In like manner they first sent to prison and afterwards condemned to transportation their leading adversaries in the Council of the Ancients and in the Assembly of the Representatives. An expedient so simple and easy gave them a majority in both Chambers, and thus was established in power for the present the semi-Jacobin and, unhappily, also the non-pacific party.

The results of the Eighteenth of Fructidor were quickly felt at Lille. In the first place the former Plenipotentiaries were recalled, and two patriots of austerer mould, Messrs. Treilhard and Bonnier, were

appointed in their place. Yet little or nothing was left to the discretion of these new negotiators. They were compelled to act in mere obedience to peremptory orders. They were instructed to demand, and they did demand, from Lord Malmesbury (requiring also an answer in the course of the same day) whether he had sufficient powers for restoring to the French Republic and to its allies all the conquests which, since the beginning of the war, had passed into the hands of the English. Lord Malmesbury replied that he thought the question of his full powers had been some time since decided; but that, to avoid all misunderstanding, he must declare, as he had already declared, that he neither could nor ought to treat upon any other principle than that of compensations. On receiving this communication Messrs. Treilhard and Bonnier immediately wrote again to apprise the English Minister of a decree of the Executive Directory, "That in case Lord Malmesbury shall declare himself not to have the necessary authority for agreeing to all the restitutions which the laws and the treaties binding the French Republic make indispensable, he shall have to return within four-and-twenty hours to his Court to ask for sufficient powers." And to this strange communication, almost without a parallel in the annals of diplomacy, Messrs. Treilhard and Bonnier thought fit to add from themselves: "Lord Malmesbury can see in this determination of the Executive Directory nothing else than the intention to hasten the moment when the negotiation may be followed up with the certainty of a speedy conclusion."

"It was my wish," so writes Lord Malmesbury on this occasion, "to give every opening to the French Plenipotentiaries to recall the violent step they had taken, and, if possible, convince them of its extreme impropriety."[3] With this object he proposed and they agreed to another interview. He found them conciliatory and earnest in their language, but fast bound by their instructions. No alternative was left him but to go as he was bid. He set out from Lille early on the 18th of September, and the day but one after arrived in London.

Great was the disappointment that ensued, not in London merely, but in Paris also. The Directors found it necessary to excuse themselves. They protested that in the step which they had taken they had all along meant peace; and they ordered their Plenipotentiaries to remain at Lille as though in expectation of Lord Malmesbury's return. Lord Malmesbury, however, by direction of the Cabinet, wrote back from London to declare "That the King could no longer treat in an enemy's country without being certain that the customs established among all civilized nations with regard to public Ministers would be respected for the future in the person of his Plenipotentiary."[4]

On a calm review of the whole transaction there seems no just ground to impute, as there was imputed, ill faith to either side. But we must deeply deplore

[3] Despatch to Lord Grenville, September 17, 1797.

[4] Note to the French Plenipotentiaries, October 5, 1797.

that the negotiation at Lille coincided with and was controlled by the *coup d'état* at Paris. The French Directors felt themselves bound to take a rude, nay, insulting course in vindication of their recent party-cry; and that course could not be otherwise than resented by the English Cabinet. Thus, while the two nations might be sincerely desirous of peace, the continuation of war during several years came to be imposed upon them. Pitt, much as his conduct was misrepresented at the time, had been earnest and consistent in his zeal for peace. He was prepared, had he found any traces of conciliatory spirit in our adversaries, to have contended in the cause of peace with the formidable obstacles that lay in its path at home, with the vehement prejudice of the King, the unbending temper of Lord Grenville, and the warlike ardour of some other of his colleagues. Lord Malmesbury, after a long conversation at this period with Windham, notes of him that "he still persists in the idea of the *bellum internecinum* and the invading of France."

But there was yet a sequel, and a strange one, to this story. No sooner had Lord Malmesbury left Lille than Mr. Pitt received a secret overture, on the part of Barras, offering peace on his own terms, if only an enormous sum—no less than two millions sterling—could be provided for Barras and his friends. The whole offer will be found detailed in Mr. Pitt's letter to the King. Next day, after receiving the King's assent, he replied to the secret agent as follows.

"Holwood, September 23, 1797.

"Tell Mr. —— that I can make no engagement without knowing the conditions; but that I should not be unwilling to undertake for the payment of 450,000*l.* if the conditions are satisfactory, and supposing the time and mode of payment can be conveniently arranged, and the transaction remain secret. Before I can say more, he must produce the paper to which he has referred, and explain all points specifically. On doing so he will receive a distinct answer."

Some further particulars may be gathered from Lord Malmesbury's Diary of the same dates. "Barras confessedly the only one in the secret: he and his expect to persuade Rewbell, and to prevail on him to take his share of the bribe." In the result, however, the whole of their notable project—I know not under what circumstances, or for what reason—fell to the ground.

At the very time, and almost on the very day, when the Minister to his deep disappointment found the public negotiation at an end, he was shocked by a grievous family misfortune. This was the decease of his dear friend and relative Edward Eliot, at the early age of thirty-nine. The news reached Pitt on the morning of the 20th of September—the morning of the same day on which Lord Malmesbury arrived in London. I do not find in the series of correspondence any letter from Pitt to his mother on this affliction, nor yet for some time afterwards. At this, as at some other places, a few appear to have been lost.

Here, however, are a few lines which Pitt wrote to Addington the same day:

"Holwood, September 20, 1797.

"I am grieved indeed to tell you, and you will, I know, be grieved to hear, that a return of Eliot's complaint has ended fatally. The account reached me from Cornwall this morning, at a moment when I was quite unprepared for the event. You will not wonder if I do not write on any other subject. Lord Malmesbury is returned on the grounds I expected.

"Ever yours,

"W. P."

Here also is an extract of another letter which Wilberforce wrote to Lord Muncaster on this sad occasion:—

"Bath, September 27, 1797.

. . . . . .

"I can truly say that I scarcely know any one whose loss I have so much cause to regret. . . . Peace be with him. May my last end be like his. You will not be sorry to hear that, as Rose, who was an eye-witness, informed me, the effect produced on Mr. Pitt by the news, which came in a letter from Lord Eliot by the common post with his others, exceeded conception. Rose says he never saw and never expects to see any thing like it. To Pitt the loss of Eliot is a loss indeed—and then his poor little girl!"

It is worthy of note that only a few months before—in February of this same year—Mr. Wilberforce, in common with several others, had warmly pressed the appointment of Mr. Eliot as Governor-General of India. The nomination seemed to be secure, since, as we are told, "both Mr. Dundas and Lord Cornwallis preferred him to any other person." But even then a severe

attack of illness compelled him to decline the honourable post.[5]

About a fortnight before the calamitous decease of Mr. Eliot we find in Mr. Pitt's correspondence, almost for the first time for many years, some reference to his failure of health. The toils of office and of Parliament at a most arduous crisis told at last severely upon a constitution that was never strong. He suffered greatly, as did Sir Robert Peel in 1846, from head-aches.

Writing to Dundas from Holwood, Pitt gives in the first place some account of Lord Malmesbury's negotiation, and then goes on to say:

"September 6, 1797.

". . . . . This of course will prevent my coming to Walmer at present; besides which, my brother and Lady Chatham are still here, and (which is a less pleasant reason) I have a return of head-ache, which I have not been able to get rid of for several days, and which makes me less inclined to a long journey than even to a long letter. I hope you and Lady Jane have made good use of the return of summer, which, however, I fear is again taking its leave."

Busy as was this year to the Prime Minister, he found in it some intervals, and perhaps at this very juncture, for other studies. Bishop Tomline, at nearly the outset of his biography, thus refers to it: "I had frequent opportunities of observing Mr. Pitt's accurate knowledge of the Bible, and I may, I trust, be allowed to mention the following anecdote:—In the year 1797 I

[5] Life of Wilberforce, vol. ii. p. 192.

was reading with him in manuscript my 'Exposition of the First of the Thirty-nine Articles,' which I afterwards published in the 'Elements of Christian Theology.' There were several quotations from Scripture, all of which he remembered, and made no observation upon them. At last we came to a quotation at which he stopped, and said, 'I do not recollect that passage in the Bible, and it does not sound like Scripture.' It was a quotation from the Apocrypha, which he had not read."

It was also perhaps during the same period of sickness that Pitt sought solace in a translation from one of Horace's Odes. It is the same recreation which in our own day has sometimes pleased both Mr. Gladstone and Lord Derby. There is one version, or rather one paraphrase, as follows, in Pitt's own handwriting, which his last private Secretary has preserved. The manuscript has no date, but the paper bears the water-mark "Portal & C°., 1796."

Hor. Carm., Lib. iii. *Ode* 2.

"How bless'd, how glorious they who bravely fall,
Their lives devoted, at their country's call!
Death too pursues the coward as he flies;
The dart o'ertakes him, and disgrac'd he dies.
No mean repulse intrepid Virtue knows;
Spotless and pure her native splendour glows;
No gaudy ensigns her's, of borrowed pow'r,
No fame, dependent on the varying hour;
Bow'd to no yoke, her honours are her own,
Nor court the breath of popular renown.
On wing sublime resistless Virtue soars;
And, spurning human haunts and earthly shores,
To those whom godlike deeds forbid to die,
Unbars the gates of Immortality."

Two events of great importance to our foreign policy occurred upon the Continent before the close of the year. A definitive treaty of peace between the Emperor of Germany and the French Republic was signed at Campo Formio on the 17th of October. The spoils of fallen Venice served to indemnify the Court of Vienna for its cession of Belgium and Lombardy, while the affairs which more especially concerned the Germanic Empire were referred to a future Congress to be held at Rastadt.

On the 16th of November, after a languishing illness, the King of Prussia died. He left the national exchequer empty, and the national reputation impaired; and his son and successor, Frederick William the Third, a young prince animated by the best intentions, but shy and self-diffident, confined himself in the first instance to schemes of internal reform.

In the ensuing month, writing to his friend Addington from Walmer Castle, on the very day of Camperdown, Mr. Pitt speaks of his health as follows:—

"October 11, 1797.

". . . . I am just returned from a very fine lounging ride, which pretended to be called shooting; and I am already so much the better for the continuance of Farquhar's prescription and (what perhaps is more effectual) for the air of Walmer, that I will not despair of having little or no occasion to say anything about myself."

Most signal was the fortune to England which delayed the equipment of the Dutch fleet until the mutiny in our

own had passed away. It was not till near the close of June that the preparations in the ports of Holland were completed. Then Wolfe Tone and another Irish exile, Lewines by name, were summoned in all haste to the Hague. They found there General Hoche, who had arrived only just before them. "Good news for you!" he cried; "the two Dutch chiefs, the Governor-General Daendels and the Admiral De Winter, desire to do something striking that shall rescue their country from decline. By the most indefatigable pains they have got together at the Texel sixteen sail of the line, and eight or ten frigates, all ready for sea, and in the best condition. The object they have in view is the invasion of Ireland. For this object they will embark the whole of their national troops, amounting to fifteen thousand men, besides three thousand stands of arms and eighty pieces of artillery."

But there was an obstacle. The French Government demanded that of the invading force five thousand men at least should be French, and that General Hoche should have the supreme command of the whole. On the other hand the Dutch Government, which had defrayed the entire expense, wished to have the entire glory, of the expedition. Finally General Hoche, in a generous spirit, waived his pretensions, going back to Paris, and from thence to his army of the Sambre and Meuse. The French Directors, not a little chafed, sent orders to prepare another armament of their own at Brest, for the command of which, when ready, they intended Hoche. Meanwhile the negotiation at Lille being now in progress, they did not scruple to keep up the spirits of the Irish exiles by very positive but very

false assurances. They authorised General Simon to declare in a letter, which was shown to Lewines and Wolfe Tone, that "the Directors would make no peace with England in which the interests of Ireland should not be fully discussed agreeably to the wishes of her people."[6]

At this point the two Irishmen parted. Lewines set out from Holland to join General Hoche, while Wolfe Tone embarked on board the flag-ship at the Texel. The Dutch fleet was now ready to proceed, and under no unfavourable auspices at its first setting out, since Admiral Duncan off the Texel had at this time only eleven sail of the line. But as it chanced, the Dutch ships were kept in port the entire summer by adverse winds. If ever a fair breeze did spring up, it invariably either changed or died away again in the course of a few hours. During this time the favourable season passed by, and the English fleet was reinforced. The journal of Wolfe Tone at this period abounds with dismal entries: "July 19.—Wind foul still. Horrible! Horrible! Admiral De Winter and I endeavour to pass away the time playing the flute, which he does very well; we have some good duets." "July 26.—I am to-day eighteen days aboard, and we have not had eighteen minutes of fair wind. Well—'tis but in vain for soldiers to complain!"

At length, towards the middle of August, the Admiral summoned Wolfe Tone to a private conference. He pointed out that Duncan had increased his fleet to seventeen sail of the line; so that the English at the

[6] Journal of Wolfe Tone, June 21, 1797.

Texel had now a superiority in force above the Dutch. Moreover the Dutch troops, so long pent up on shipboard, had by this time consumed nearly all the provisions in store, so that even a victory over Duncan would not enable the voyage to proceed. Under such circumstances it would be necessary to relinquish the expedition to Ireland, although a descent on a much smaller scale upon some point of the English coast might still perhaps be attempted. Tone, though most bitterly chagrined, had little to allege against such considerations. Soon afterwards he set out to join General Hoche at his head-quarters of Wetzlar. Here, however, another mortification not less keen awaited him. Hoche, whom Wolfe Tone found in declining health, in a fortnight more expired. The General was not yet thirty years of age, and his illness has been frequently ascribed to poison from his enemies in France. Yet the journal of Wolfe Tone, who had no conceivable bias on this question, clearly shows that a neglected cough and rapid consumption were the sole causes of his death.

With General Hoche died the master spirit of the Irish expeditions. Henceforth the armament at Brest was slowly and languidly pursued. But on breaking off the negotiation at Lille, the French Directory resolved to strike a great blow at the Texel. They exerted their influence over the Government of Holland, and caused orders to be sent to Admiral De Winter to sally forth and give battle to the English fleet. Winter accordingly set sail with the first favourable wind. Duncan, on the other hand, having sus-

tained some damage in the recent gales, had put back to Yarmouth Roads. But he had left behind some armed sloops to watch the enemy's fleet, and no sooner did he learn its advance than he returned with press of sail. He found De Winter's ships not yet out of sight of land; that land the Dutch coast between Camperdown and Egmont. Without delay he interposed between them and the shore, so as to compel an action had they even desired to avoid it. The two fleets might be taken as nearly equal in their ships, since the English had sixteen sail of the line and two frigates, and the Dutch fifteen sail of the line and four frigates; but the English were superior both in the number of men and in the weight of metal. A little after noon on the 11th of October, the English fleet, bearing down in two lines of attack, began the battle. Admiral Onslow in the Monarch led the van. As he went on, his Captain bade him notice that the enemy's ships lay close, and that he would find no passage through them. "The Monarch will make a passage," answered Onslow; and he still held on his course. Then the Dutch ship opposite gave way, and he went through, engaging without delay the officer of corresponding rank—the enemy's Vice-Admiral.[7]

A battle commenced in such a spirit boded well for victory. Duncan himself, on board the Venerable and at the head of the second line, brought his vessel alongside the Vryheid (or Liberty), the flag-ship of De Winter. These two rival ships, each of them a

[7] Brenton's Naval History, vol. i. p. 354.

seventy-four, sustained a well-matched conflict within pistol-shot for upwards of three hours. So keen was the fire, that at last De Winter was, it is said, the only man on his quarter-deck who was not either wounded or killed. Not in the Vryheid alone, but throughout the fleet, the Dutch fought with a courage and perseverance well worthy their ancient renown. But Fortune declared against them. By four o'clock the Dutch Admiral had struck to Duncan, and the Dutch Vice-Admiral to Onslow; and the action ceasing, the English found themselves in possession of nine Dutch ships of the line, besides two of the Dutch frigates. The scanty remnant of De Winter's fleet, favoured by the shallows near the coast, sought refuge in the Texel; while Duncan, amidst a heavy gale, conveyed his prizes to the Nore. The loss in both fleets had been most severe. Of killed and wounded there had been upwards of eleven hundred on the Dutch, and upwards of a thousand on the English side.[8]

It is said that on the evening of this hard-fought day, and in the cabin of the Venerable, Duncan and De Winter sat down to whist together, and the latter, as he lost the game, placidly remarked that it was rather hard to be beaten twice in one day by the same opponent.

The battle of Camperdown (for such is the name it has borne) was hailed in England with merited applause. It was felt that the national honour had been

[8] James's Naval History, vol. ii. p. 81. Duncan himself in his official report declares that "the carnage on board the two ships that bore the Admirals' flags has been beyond all description."

worthily maintained against our ancient rivals at sea. It was felt that there was an end to all fears of invasion from that side. Strongest of all, perhaps, was the satisfaction—felt rather than expressed—that the very ships which had been so lately in open revolt; which had sent their own officers on shore; which had helped to blockade the Thames against their own government, had now so signally redeemed their character and done their duty. On the very day of his arrival at the Nore, the victorious Admiral—almost at the close of his active career, since he was now sixty-seven years of age—was raised to the Peerage with the rank of Viscount. Vice-Admiral Onslow was created a Baronet, and two Captains, Trollope and Fairfax, were made Knights Banneret. The thanks of Parliament were voted and a medal was struck to commemorate the victory.

Turning to the events of this year beyond the limits of Europe, we find Admiral Nelson achieve great personal distinction, although no public success. In the month of July he was detached by Earl St. Vincent to attack the fortified town of Santa Cruz, in the island of Teneriffe. He had a squadron of three ships of the line and as many frigates, but not, as he had asked, a body of troops on board. The difficulties of the coast combined with the want of soldiers to defeat this enterprise and the attack of Nelson. Yet in this attack both officers and men showed the most undaunted bravery, Nelson himself being grievously wounded, with the loss of his right arm.

In the West Indies, and earlier in the year, another

Spanish colony, Trinidad, had yielded to an English expedition commanded by Sir Ralph Abercromby, and it was this conquest which at Lille the English Government had desired to retain.

Pitt, as we have seen, was on the Kentish coast at the time of the battle of Camperdown. His letter from thence to Lady Chatham will certainly be read with considerable interest:—

"Walmer Castle, October 22, 1797.

"My dear Mother,

"I need not say how much satisfaction and comfort I received from your most kind and welcome letter, which reached me yesterday, and brought me the best proof of your returning strength. I hope, however, that your desire to give pleasure to others will not make you repeat the effort of writing when it can be attended with inconvenience. You have a secretary [9] who will always have the goodness to let us know how you do, which is the point most essential. My project of visiting the fleet in my way hither failed, as none of our ships or their prizes had reached the Nore when we passed; but this disappointment is amply repaired by a visit from Lord Duncan, who is now here as well as Lord Hood. The latter came with us from town, and is, to do him justice, as proud and happy in the victory of an Admiral even of Keppel's school as he could be if it were his own. Lord Duncan joined us very opportunely on Friday at Dover Castle, where we had gone the day before to be present at a *feu de joie* in honour of his victory. Our Admirals

[9] Her granddaughter, Miss Eliot.

leave us to-morrow, but we shall probably stay here till the end of the week, and shall probably visit the fleet in our way back to-morrow sennight, when the King intends to go on board. Such a ceremony will be no bad prelude for the opening of the Session.

"Ever, my dear Mother, &c.,

"W. PITT."

The Earl of Mornington was one of this party. He had recently obtained from Pitt the office of Governor-General of India, together with an English peerage, and was now preparing to commence his most brilliant Eastern career. In a Memorandum, many years later, bearing date November, 1836, he has thus described the scene:—

"In the month of September, 1797, I went to Walmer Castle to meet Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas, and to receive my last instructions. I found Mr. Pitt in the highest spirits, entertaining officers and country gentlemen with his usual hospitality. Amongst others Admiral Duncan was his constant and favourite guest. His fleet was then in the Downs preparing for the memorable victory of Camperdown. The Admiral was a lively and jovial companion, and seemed to be quite delighted with Mr. Pitt's society. I embarked for India early in the month of November, 1797, and I returned to England in January, 1806."[1]

Parliament met again on the 2nd of November. The King in his opening Speech had expressed his great concern at the failure of the late negotiations, which he

[1] See the Quarterly Review, No. cxiv., p. 490.

attributed "solely to the evasive conduct, the unwarrantable pretensions, and the inordinate ambition of those with whom we have to contend, and, above all, to their inveterate animosity against these kingdoms." Fox, Grey, Sheridan, and their principal friends continued to absent themselves from these discussions; but their secession was far from producing the effect which they had hoped. In general, so far as we can gather, it was disapproved by the public. It was often and bitterly censured in the House of Commons. On the rare occasions when Fox and his friends reappeared in their places, they found it necessary to defend themselves before they could proceed to inveigh against the Ministers.

It was perhaps at this period that Erskine expressed some willingness, had he been invited, to join the administration. So at least writes Mr. Rose in 1806 —"His political attachment to Mr. Fox has not been steady and uniform. I recollect Mr. Pitt telling me many years ago that on meeting Mr. Erskine at the Opera the latter took occasion to tell him that he had no *determined* political attachments."[2]

It can scarcely on the whole be doubted that in this, as in nearly all other Parliamentary secessions, the seceders lost instead of gaining ground. Nor was it only because their retreat was denounced as unpatriotic and unwarrantable; nor only because their names were less frequently before the public. The small minority which remained at its post stood forth in an advan-

[2] Diaries, &c., vol. ii. p. 253.

tageous contrast. Some members of the Opposition who continued to take part in the debates rose at once from a secondary to a prominent place. Such was especially the case with Sir Francis Burdett and with Mr. Tierney.

George Tierney was born at Gibraltar in 1761; the son of a merchant engaged in the Spanish trade. He was educated for the Bar, and first entered Parliament in 1789 as one of the representatives of Colchester. But in 1796, after some contests at Southwark, an Election Committee declared him the sitting Member. The absence of Fox gave for the first time full play to his eminent abilities. With considerable knowledge of finance he combined great power of lucid statement, while for irony and sarcasm he had, as it were, an inborn aptitude. He now attached himself in an especial manner to the Budgets of Pitt, of which he became the constant, the unsparing, and the able critic. Yet he was far from confining his attacks to financial subjects only. Speaking on the 7th of November, he frankly said: "I am determined to give my negative not only to this, but to every other act of the present administration. I can assure the House that I have a general retainer for the whole Session." Nor did he fail in this engagement. His conduct exhibited all that undiscriminating opposition which his language promised.

The first Budget that called forth in their full extent the powers of Mr. Tierney was explained to the House of Commons on the 24th of November. It was no doubt of a most stringent kind. There was a deficiency announced of nineteen millions. The Minister proposed

to cover this alarming void, partly by a new loan of twelve millions, and partly by a general tax to raise seven millions within the year. "I am aware," said Mr. Pitt, "that this sum does far exceed anything which has been raised in any former period at one time, but I trust I have stated sufficient reasons to show that it is a wise and necessary measure." The plan was to augment the Assessed Taxes at once to three times, and progressively to four times, their existing amount, with, however, some deductions and exceptions in favour of those least well able to pay. The number of persons immediately affected by this impost was calculated by Pitt at about 800,000.

So vast an increase in taxes already looked upon as inquisitorial and oppressive could not fail to arouse the public discontent. It might of itself sufficiently explain the adverse reception of Pitt on his passage to St. Paul's about three weeks afterwards. Fox as Member for Westminster, and Sheridan as Member for Stafford, were requested by their constituents to come back and oppose the measure. Not sorry, perhaps, of the plea for again appearing in their places, they stood forth at the Second Reading and spoke with their wonted power. "What is the object of the war?" said Sheridan. "The war is continued for the sole purpose of keeping nine worthless Ministers in their places." "What will be the results of this Bill?" said Fox. "It tends to the immediate destruction of our trade, to the annihilation of our fortunes, and possibly to the loss of liberty of our persons. . . . . Gentlemen seem to forget that we affect at least to call ourselves the

representatives of the people. I know that we are no such thing, but we call ourselves so. Yet up to this time in this House only fifteen Members could be found to vote against a measure upon which out of this House there is not merely a majority but an unanimity of dissent!"[3] But to both these great orators Pitt made a reply of which it may be said that it lost nothing of its point and vigour by its superior calmness and dignity of tone. "I will leave it," he said, "to the House to judge how far those who in principle give the enemy a right to ask all—who by decrying our resources give them confidence to advance every pretension—and who kindly inform them that from our inability to resist they may extort whatever they demand—whether these, I say, are the true friends of their country, or the enlightened advocates of peace!"

The real necessity of the case was so apparent that, notwithstanding the popular excitement out of doors, the minority against the Second Reading was only 50. In the Committee Pitt made divers alterations and modifications in the scheme; but the popular excitement had increased, and at the Third Reading, when Fox and Sheridan again appeared, the minority rose to 75.

It had been deemed right to celebrate by a solemn act of public worship the three great naval victories achieved by Lords Howe, St. Vincent, and Duncan over the French, the Spaniards, and the Dutch. The 19th of December was appointed as the day of Public Thanksgiving, and there was a special Service at St.

[3] Parl. Hist., vol. xxxiii. p. 1106, 1112, and 1121.

Paul's. To this went in solemn procession the King and Queen, the Royal Family, the Cabinet and the Foreign Ministers, the two Houses of Parliament, the chief naval commanders or their representatives, and a body of seamen and marines. In general the temper of the people was in accordance with the purpose of the day. But Pitt on his way to the Cathedral was in some places hooted at and otherwise insulted by the multitude. In consequence of their conduct he did not return at once in his carriage, but stopped to dine with the Speaker and some other gentlemen in Doctors' Commons, and in the evening he was escorted home by a party of the London Light Horse.[4]

Here is a letter addressed by Pitt to his mother at the close of this most eventful year.

"Downing Street, Friday, December 29, 1797.

"My dear Mother,

"An evening's leisure, from there not having been a sufficient number to make a House of Commons to-day, gives me an opportunity, which I have long wanted, of writing to you. I have nothing new to tell as to what is going on here. The Finance measure (which occupies most of our time) proceeds exactly as might be expected, with a general admission of its necessity, and with a great disposition in every quarter to object where it will feel the burden. But on the whole I have little doubt that we shall have finished this business very satisfactorily by the end of next week. I remain extremely well, and have holidays

[4] Ann. Register, 1797, p. 80.

enough in the interval of each week to make up completely for the confinement at other times, which, however, has been less than usual during the Session.

"You will be very glad to make Mr. Mitchell happy by telling him that I can give him the living of East Mersea in Essex, now vacant, and worth, as I am told, between three and four hundred pounds a-year. Residence will not, I understand, be required, but a liberal allowance to the curate. It is in the gift of the Crown, and in the diocese of the Bishop of London. If your usual secretary or any other informs me that Mr. Mitchell accepts, the presentation shall be made out immediately. My brother and Lady Chatham are gone, as you probably know, to Apthorp. My brother's return, as well as Lord Westmorland's, depends on the necessity of attendance in the House of Lords. I rather think they will not be wanted. Pray give my kind remembrances to Mrs. Stapleton, and love to my dear niece, who, I hope, retains her attachment to Burton.

"Ever, my dear Mother, &c.,

"W. PITT."

In 1796 there were no less than sixteen, and in 1797 no less than fourteen British peerages conferred: a vast multiplication of honours, and scarcely even in such times to be defended. Among them were included many of Mr. Pitt's Parliamentary supporters in the House of Commons. Mr. Rolle became Lord Rolle, Mr. Lascelles became Lord Harewood, Sir Gilbert Elliot became Lord Minto, Sir John Rous became Lord Rous, Mr. Thomas Powys became Lord Lilford, Mr. Robert Smith became Lord Carrington.

On this last name let me for a moment linger. It is not that I would here seek to delineate the character of one very dear to me, as many years since I sought to do.[5] It is not that in this work I am entitled to express my grateful memory of my grandfather's many acts of most generous kindness. It is not merely because I am proud of my descent from one who himself descended from one of the burgesses of Nottingham, and, never claiming to himself any descent beyond them, raised himself by his integrity of character and his thorough mastery of all points of business from a banker's office to the Peerage. It is not merely because I deem him a worthy co-mate of Lord Overstone and the first Lord Ashburton. But there is one circumstance connected with his elevation that I am bound to notice, not as the descendant of Lord Carrington, but as the biographer of Mr. Pitt.

I am bound then, as I think, to notice some Memoirs which Sir Nathaniel Wraxall wrote for posthumous publication, and which in fact did not appear till the year 1836. These Memoirs display in many passages the bitter feelings of a disappointed candidate for Parliamentary and official distinction. It is in such a spirit that he approaches the peerage to Mr. Robert Smith. He ascribes that peerage to corrupt motives on the part of Mr. Pitt as "in return for pecuniary assistance," as rendering it probable "that even his elevated mind could so far bend to circumstances."

Such a calumny, however, did not remain without

[5] Ann. Register, 1838, p. 225.

contradiction. It was exposed in a letter from Lord Carrington himself, which first appeared in the 'Quarterly Review' of the same year.[6] The writer of that article introduces the letter as follows:—

"Sir Nathaniel no doubt thought that it was not likely that Lord Carrington should survive to repel by his own testimony this slander on his illustrious friend. Fortunately Lord Carrington still lives,—retaining in a venerable old age all the clearness of intellect, the amiability of character, and the nice sense of honour which recommended him above half a century ago to the friendship of Mr. Pitt; and we are happy to be able to lay before our readers a letter written, without any expectation that it would ever become public, by Lord Carrington, to the friend and contemporary of himself and Mr. Pitt, the Right Hon. Thomas Grenville, immediately after the appearance of Wraxall's publication.

"'Wycombe Abbey, August 7, 1836.

"'My dear Sir,—A thousand thanks to you for your kind recollection of me. It brings to my mind the pleasure I enjoyed in your society in former days. I never recollect your name without the kindest feelings.

"'I should have broke in upon your retirement at Dropmore, to pay my respects to Lady Grenville, and to see you; but I have been confined to my couch for the last three weeks by an accident to my leg, which, being neglected, became very troublesome. As soon as I am able to put it to the ground, I shall direct my steps to Dropmore.

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[6] No. cxiv. p. 456.

"'Have you seen the recent publication called "Sir N. Wraxall's Posthumous Memoirs"? It commences more than fifty years ago, and contains many of the same sort of calumnies with which his former work was chargeable. In the earliest pages he has thought fit to state that I owed my peerage to money transactions with Mr. Pitt. You, who knew our illustrious friend so well, will picture to yourself the indignation with which such an offer on my part, however disguised and covered, would have been received by him, and I am sure also that you would think me incapable of proposing it. Sir N. Wraxall also, in another part, alludes to Mr. Pitt's "gratitude" to me, and states that, at his death, a patent was in progress to raise me in the peerage. Such a thing was never offered by him or desired by me. The suppression of these charges for forty years will certainly, as Sir N. Wraxall intended, have the effect of screening him from personal responsibility, but, I think, no other. Lord Abercorn is also named, and, I am confident, with equal falsehood, as being concerned in this shameful traffic.

"'I can assert, with perfect confidence and truth, that, during the twenty-five years in which I enjoyed Mr. Pitt's friendship, not only no money transactions ever passed between us, but that not a single word of allusion to such a subject was ever spoken by either of us. You may remember towards the close of his life the various offers of assistance which Mr. Pitt received, and rejected; and with what privacy a subscription was entered into by his particular friends (unknown to himself at the time, and I believe ever after) to discharge some pressing demands.

"'I owe gratitude to Providence for having extended my life to eighty-four years in health and spirits, but

still more for having enabled me to contradict in person a calumny so unmerited.

"'I am, my dear Sir, &c.,

"'CARRINGTON.'"[7]

In November, 1797, appeared the first number of the *Anti-Jacobin*. It came forth periodically, that is twice a week, till Midsummer the next year, and it certainly produced a strong political effect. It brought excellent humour and ridicule into the service of the Administration. It turned to Pitt's side what hitherto had flowed against him, the current of poetical wit. The chief founder and promoter of the work was Mr. Canning. In the first number since the Introduction he gave in English *Sapphics* his well-known "Knife-grinder" holding up to derision the false claims of a "Friend of Humanity" on the new French pattern.

"Tell me, Knife-grinder, how came you to grind knives?
Did some rich man tyrannically use you?
Was it the Squire? or parson of the parish?
Or the attorney?"

The *Sapphics* which it was here designed to ridicule were those of Mr. Southey, and the "Friend of Humanity" glanced at was Mr. Tierney.

In prose also Mr. Canning made several home-thrusts. He took off with great spirit the boastful and rambling style of Erskine whenever he had not a Jury to address. Here is in some part the pretended speech to the Whig

[7] Lord Carrington died on the 18th of September, 1838.

Club :—"Mr. Erskine concluded in a strain of agonising and impressive eloquence. He said he had been a soldier and a sailor, and had a son at Winchester School. He had been called by special retainers during the summer to many different and distant parts of the country—travelling chiefly in post-chaises. He stood here as a man—he stood in the eye, indeed in the hand of God—to whom, in the presence of the company and waiters, he solemnly appealed. He was of noble, perhaps Royal blood—he had a house at Hampstead—and he was convinced of the necessity of a thorough and radical reform."

This is only a caricature; but I may observe in passing that it differs very little from the portraits. Several grave observers will be found to speak of Erskine in nearly the same terms. Dr. Somerville, for example, the Minister of Jedburgh and the historian of Queen Anne, came up to town in 1791 to promote the repeal of the Test Act. He attended at Lord Malmesbury's house a meeting of some Opposition members, and has described to the very life the scene before him :—

"I remember I was amused with observing that while Mr. Fox's countenance indicated profound attention to all that was said, his fingers were incessantly in motion, catching the drops that fell from the wax candles, and turning and forming them into little pellets. Mr. Erskine once and again rose from his seat, mentioning the burden of business that was in his hands, and the necessity he was under of leaving the company, naming the number of briefs on which he

must be prepared to plead next morning in the Courts at Westminster. The number I do not now recollect, but it was so enormous that after he had left the company I could not help expressing my surprise. Mr. Windham replied, 'You are not to believe all that Mr. Erskine says;' and the other gentlemen smiled."[8]

Next to Mr. Canning the principal founder of the Anti-Jacobin was Mr. George Ellis, who had now attached himself to Pitt, but who in earlier years had been among the writers of the Rolliad. One day at a Ministerial party he was called on by one of the guests to give the secret history of the first poem. Mr. Ellis seemed a little embarrassed, but Pitt, leaning forward with much good humour, as ready to hear him, quoted the line—

"Immo age, et a primâ dic hospes origine nobis."[9]

The aptness of the quotation was at the time admired. How appropriate the word *Hospes* as applied to a recent convert; and with how much good taste did Pitt avoid the *erroresque tuos* of a succeeding line!

Not only French politics or principles were attacked in the Anti-Jacobin. There was a poem, the 'Loves of the Triangles,' in ridicule of Dr. Darwin's 'Loves of the Plants.' There was a play, 'The Rovers,' in ridicule of the early dramas of Kotzebue and Schiller. In this Mr. Canning introduced with admirable humour

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[8] 'My own Life and Times,' by Dr. Somerville, p. 239, ed. 1861.
[9] Æneid. lib. 1, vers. 753.

an account of the signature of Magna Charta according to the style of a modern newspaper. "Yes, here," cries the patriot Beefington, "here it is, just above the advertisements. And look, there are some further particulars. —Extract of a letter from Egham.—'My dear friend, we are all here in high spirits—the interesting event which took place this morning at Runnymede in the neighbourhood of this town..... Messengers were instantly despatched to Cardinal Pandulfo; and their Majesties, after partaking of a cold collation, returned to Windsor."

In the 'Rovers' Mr. Canning also brought in perhaps the most popular piece in the whole collection—the song of Rogero in prison recalling his youthful days

"at the U-
niversity of Göttingen,
niversity of Göttingen."

It is said that when Mr. Canning showed to Mr. Pitt the first five stanzas of this song, the Minister was so much amused with it that he took up a pen and composed the last stanza on the spot. That stanza is as follows, and probably, as I have heard it called, the best of them all:—

"Sun, moon, and thou vain world adieu,
That Kings and priests are plotting in;
Here doomed to starve on water-gru-
el, never shall I see the U-
niversity of Göttingen,
niversity of Göttingen."

It has also been said that in the poem entitled 'New Morality,' and dated July 9, 1798, Mr. Pitt was the author of the fine lines beginning "So thine own oak."[1] But I look in vain for any positive or contemporaneous testimony in support of these allegations; and I do not think it clear that Mr. Pitt added even a single line of his own to this famous collection.

The Latin verses in the volume were by Lord Mornington, and the translations from them by Lord Carlisle.

The talent and the acrimony of the Anti-Jacobin could not fail to raise up numerous answers, or rather, indeed, counter-attacks. Most of these were of very inferior merit. There was one, however, an 'Epistle to the Editor of the Anti-Jacobin,' which was written by Lord Melbourne, many years afterwards Prime Minister, then the Hon. William Lamb, a young man of nineteen, fresh from Cambridge. Canning took into his own hands the rejoinder, which thus commences:—

"Bard of the borrowed lyre! to whom belong
The shreds and remnants of each hackney song;
Whose verse thy friends in vain for wit explore,
And count but one good line in eighty-four."

It is recorded by tradition from these times that the "one good line" of Mr. Lamb to which Mr. Canning thus referred was the last of the following couplet:—

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[1] Notes to the Anti-Jacobin, by Mr. Charles Edmonds, p. 184 and 241, ed. 1854.

"By Morpeth's gait, important, proud, and big—
By Leveson Gower's crop-imitating wig."

Lord Granville Leveson Gower, afterwards the first Earl Granville, wore a brown wig to resemble the natural hair, which was a novelty in 1798, and which, therefore, drew upon him the notice of a satirist. Thus after many years were the pleasantries of the Rolliad requited.

CHAPTER XXV.

1798.

Dinner in celebration of Fox's birthday — Dismissal of the Duke of Norfolk from his employments — Patriotic subscriptions — Pitt's scheme for increasing the Supplies — The *Armée d'Angleterre* — Correspondence between the United Irishmen and the French Government — State of Ireland — Progress of the Conspiracy against England — Excesses of both parties — The Earl of Moira — Lord Chancellor Clare — Arrest of the Irish emissaries to France, and of conspirators in Dublin — Death of Lord Edward Fitzgerald — The Rebellion — The "United Army of Wexford" — Slaughter of Protestant prisoners — Marquis Cornwallis appointed Lord Lieutenant — Lord Castlereagh — Trials of the conspirators.

IT became necessary for the Houses, contrary to uniform practice, to sit through the first days of January, that the Finance Bills might be passed. Except on rare occasions Fox and his friends continued to absent themselves from Parliament. They deemed that they better fulfilled their public duty by assiduous agitation out of doors. Thus on the 24th of January there was a great public dinner at the Crown and Anchor in celebration of Fox's birthday. At least two thousand persons attended. Fox himself was present, and the Duke of Norfolk took the chair. Three new songs on the occasion were produced by Captain Morris. Horne Tooke, so recently the opponent of Fox on the Westminster hustings, now stood forward to say that he approved of the conduct of Mr. Fox ever since Mr. Fox had fully declared himself the advocate of Parliamentary Reform.

The toast of the evening was given by the Duke in the following words:—"We are met in a moment of most serious difficulty to celebrate the birth of a man dear to the friends of freedom. I shall only recall to your memory that not twenty years ago the illustrious George Washington had not more than two thousand men to rally round him when his country was attacked. America is now free. This day full two thousand men are assembled in this place: I leave you to make the application. I propose to you the health of Charles Fox!"

Such language might be deemed sufficiently decisive. But after the Duke's own health had been given, His Grace, in returning thanks, further said: "Give me leave, before I sit down, to call on you to drink our Sovereign's health:—The Majesty of the People!"[1]

Neither of these speeches, as it appears to me, can be rightly judged without some reference to the time at which they were spoken. Be it remembered that the example of Washington was held forth at the very period when a rebellion was impending in Ireland, and when aid to that rebellion had been promised from France. Be it remembered that the Sovereignty of the People was invoked at the very period when that principle had become upon the Continent the watch-word of more than one victorious insurrection. Sentiments which at one time may be passed over as Utopian, must at another be resented as seditious. Proceeding on these views, the Duke of Norfolk was at once dis-

[1] Ann. Register, 1798, part ii. p. 6.

missed from the two offices which he held under the Crown—the Lord Lieutenancy of the West Riding, and the command of a Militia Regiment.

While thus upon the one hand the adversaries of the Government went further and further in their democratic language, there was upon the other side by a natural reaction an increased zeal in its support. Already in the preceding December—when the financial scheme of Pitt was in Committee—a practical suggestion had been thrown out by the Speaker. He was confident, he said, that many persons of affluent fortune, sensible of the delicacy which forbore from searching too minutely into capital, would be willing to come forward with free contributions beyond the rate of their assessment, and he advised a clause to give such persons the opportunity. The Minister availed himself of the idea; and during the months of February and March, 1798, such contributions rapidly flowed in. To receive them, hustings, as though for an election, had been raised beneath one of the piazzas of the Royal Exchange. There came crowding by hundreds merchants and tradesmen of all ranks, and with divers gifts, varying from one guinea to 3000*l.* On the first day the subscriptions exceeded 46,000*l.* Nor did that generous spirit decline. Mr. Robert Peel, father of the celebrated statesman, and at that time in partnership with Mr. Yates as a manufacturer of calicoes at Bury in Lancashire, paid in, from a loyal impulse, no less than 10,000*l.*[2] As I have heard the story told, Mr. Peel

[2] Macpherson's History of Commerce, vol. iv. p. 440.

having subscribed this large sum on the spur of the moment and without consulting his senior partner, travelled back to Bury in some anxiety as to that partner's assent. But Mr. Yates had a spirit as loyal as his own. On being told by Mr. Peel what he had done, he merely turned round and said, "You might as well have made it 20,000*l.* while you were about it!"

In relating the fact, Mr. Macpherson adds, "Is there any other country on the globe that could produce a manufacturer who can spare such a sum?" Thus spoke Mr. Macpherson, the annalist of Commerce, in 1805; but what would he have said had he survived to see the Manchester Exhibition of 1857?

Contributions were received from public bodies also. The City of London subscribed 10,000*l.*, and the Bank of England 200,000*l.* On the whole these free-will offerings, exclusive of 300,000*l.* which subsequently came from India, amounted to no less a sum than two millions sterling.

But great as might be this resource, the public necessities were greater still. On the 2nd of April Pitt found it requisite to bring forward a new scheme for increasing the supplies. This he desired to do by a partial commutation of the Land Tax. Till then the Land Tax had been granted year by year by Acts of Parliament. Its annual rate had long been fixed at four shillings in the pound, and its annual produce was about two millions. Pitt now proposed to make it perpetual, with a power of redemption; the sums thence accruing to be applied to the reduction of the

National Debt. By these means not only would the public revenue be to some extent assisted, but a new impulse, it was hoped, would be given to the public credit. The main objection to the proposal lay in this —that it tended to perpetuate the most grievous inequalities. There had been no new assessment since the year 1692. The value of property since that time had completely changed. Many tracts, as in Lancashire and Yorkshire, which were then mere barren moors, and which were assessed accordingly, had since that time been covered by huge factories and flourishing towns. The result was that as a whole the northern counties bore but the smallest fraction of the rate which the southern counties paid. "But then observe," said Pitt, "that during a century which has now elapsed, no proposal for a more equal partition has been ever entertained. Is it more likely, then, looking to the future, that the anomaly would be corrected, even if the tax continued to depend upon a yearly vote?"

In both Houses, however, the Bill was for the most part resisted on other grounds. To perpetuate this tax at all or in any form was represented as a most wanton oppression of the landed interest. "Take care," cried Lord Sheffield in the Commons, "not to drive gentlemen from the country!" In the Peers, Lord Thurlow went even further, and taunted the squires with their readiness to bear whatever burthens might be laid upon them. He revived a jest which had been current in the days of Sir Robert Walpole, that the country gentlemen were like sheep, which quietly suffered them-

selves to be shorn and re-shorn, but that the moneyed men were like hogs, which never failed to grunt and stir if even one bristle was touched![3] Yet in spite of such arguments, if arguments they must be called, the Bill passed by overwhelming majorities.

During the time that this Bill was still in progress, the public necessities, mainly resulting from the threats and preparations of the enemy, compelled Pitt to bring forward what he termed his second Budget. In a Committee of Ways and Means, on the 25th of April, he announced that there must be an addition of three millions to his former Estimates. There must be a new loan to that amount; and to provide for the yearly interest divers small imposts were proposed—a tax especially on armorial bearings, and a tax on the higher qualities of tea. There was little choice, and these measures passed accordingly. Nor did the Houses shrink, when the Irish Rebellion arose, from the painful duty of suspending the Habeas Corpus and renewing the Alien Acts. But here I must revert in more detail to the designs of the plotters in Ireland and of their confederates in France.

On the very day after the proclamation in Paris of the Peace of Campo Formio, the Directory issued an Order enjoining the formation of an army on the coast to be called *l'Armée d'Angleterre*, and appointing General Bonaparte to its command. "Bravo!"

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[3] The debates in the House of Lords upon the Land-Tax are, I know not for what reason, omitted both in the Parliamentary History and in Dodsley's Annual Register. But they are briefly given in Rivington's (1798, p. 233).

writes Wolfe Tone; "this looks as if they were in earnest!"

Bonaparte did indeed at first display his characteristic energy. He paid a visit of inspection to the northern ports, and directed active preparations. But by degrees his mind, and the minds of the Directors, appear to have turned to the superior importance of an expedition against Egypt. That expedition was, though with the greatest secrecy, planned for the spring of 1798. Most especially was it concealed from the Irish emissaries or exiles, who continued to be flattered with the hopes of undivided aid.

Ever since General Hoche had earnestly applied himself to the armament at Brest, there had been frequent communications on the matter between Paris and Dublin. In this perilous correspondence the chiefs of the United Irishmen trusted much rather to agents than to letter. In 1796 they had sent over Lord Edward Fitzgerald and Mr. Arthur O'Connor, and the latter held a secret conference with General Hoche on the frontier of Switzerland.[4] Subsequently they despatched Mr. Edward Lewines to reside as their Minister in France, and later still Dr. MacNevin on only a temporary mission. Besides these, as time proceeded there was a large accession at Paris of Irish refugees. Napper Tandy and the younger Tone had fled from Dublin; Lowry, Tennant, and several others from Belfast. But it may be doubted whether these men in

[4] See the details of this expedition in Moore's Life of Lord Edward Fitzgerald, vol. i. p. 278.

their exile added much to the strength of their cause. According to General Kilmaine, who discussed them with Wolfe Tone, "the conduct of many of the Irish in Paris was such as to reflect credit neither on themselves nor their country. There was nothing to be heard of amongst them but denunciations; and if every one of them separately spoke truth, all the rest were rascals!"[5]

Looking to Ireland itself, the prospect was gloomy indeed. Augmented discontents, more unmitigated violence, had followed the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam. Then, as for many years subsequent in Ireland, moderation was of all qualities the very last to be appreciated or even understood. By a frequent and fatal rebound the excesses on the one side produced excesses on the other. The passionate enemies of English connexion — the United Irishmen or Defenders — were confronted by as passionate loyalists, who assumed the name of Orangemen, in honour of King William the Third.

The first conflict between these two exasperated parties took place in the county of Armagh. It was on the 21st of December, 1795. Then a body of Defenders, though much superior in numbers, even, it is said, in the proportion of ten to one, was repulsed and routed, with the loss of forty-eight killed and many more wounded.[6] This conflict was called, from the

[5] Journal of Wolfe Tone, June 16, 1798.

[6] Memoirs on the different Rebellions in Ireland, by Sir Richard Musgrave, vol. i. p. 80.

name of a neighbouring village, the battle of the Diamond. It was celebrated at the time as a great Protestant victory, and even beyond the reigns of the Georges continued—very little to the credit of the persons using it—a favourite political toast in a part of Ireland.[7]

Some important consequences ensued from this random fight. The victors proceeded immediately after the conflict to search the houses of all whom they suspected as allies of the vanquished. Wherever they found arms, or perhaps if even they did not, they proceeded to demolish the furniture and to plunder the goods. In most cases, probably, these outrages should be ascribed not to the Orangemen who fought, but rather to the rabble that followed at their heels. We find an unexceptionable witness, Lord Gosford, at that time Chairman of the Sessions in Armagh, lament the "ferocious cruelty" which had been perpetrated on unoffending Roman Catholics, and declare that they had been or were at the mercy of "lawless banditti."[8] The result was a large emigration of the Roman Catholics from the county of Armagh to the province of Connaught.

Another consequence of the battle of the Diamond was the organisation of the Orange Society. The name had existed some time before, but the first Orange Lodge was formed in commemoration of that victory. Other Lodges grew up in rapid succession; a Grand Master with a Staff of Officers were named; arms were

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7 See the debate in the House of Commons of December 5, 1837.

8 Address of Lord Gosford, December 21, 1795.

provided; and thus throughout the province of Ulster a large and well-disciplined body was arrayed.

When the Irish Parliament met in the January ensuing, the Attorney-General (Arthur Wolfe) immediately gave notice of two Bills: the one an Insurrection Act, to prohibit the peasantry in disturbed districts from being out of their houses between sunset and sunrise; the other an Indemnity Bill, to absolve the magistrates who, in seeking to preserve the peace, had gone beyond the strict limits of the law. He also proposed to make a conspiracy to murder a felony; for so frequent, he said, were such conspiracies, that the idea of assassination had become as familiar as the idea of fowling.[9] A little later he laid before the House four Resolutions, designed as the basis for legislative measures, and declaring in strong terms both the disturbed state of the country, and the necessity of more effectual power to the magistrates. Not only should they have power to search for and secure arms, ammunition, and weapons of offence, but also in Sessions to send disorderly persons who had no visible means of gaining a subsistence to serve on board the fleet. These measures were carried by an immense majority, notwithstanding the exertions of Mr. Grattan, Mr. Ponsonby, Sir Lawrence Parsons, and a few besides.

With these measures passed, the Session ended in April, 1796; and when the next commenced in October of the same year, a further step—the suspension of the Habeas Corpus—was proposed. This seemed no unrea-

[9] See the Irish Parliamentary Debates of January 21, 1796.

sonable demand at the very moment when conspiracy was so rife in Ireland, and when a French army of invasion was embarking in the ports of Brittany; yet, like the preceding measures, it was most keenly opposed. On coming to the vote, however, there appeared a large majority, amounting to 137, in favour of the Suspension, while against it was a mere handful—only seven! "I know not," cried Grattan, "where you are leading me—from one strong Bill to another, until I see a gulf before me at whose abyss I recoil!"[1]

Grattan himself was not much more successful in behalf of the Roman Catholics. Three days afterwards he moved the following as an abstract Resolution: "That the admissibility of persons professing the Roman Catholic Religion to seats in Parliament is consistent with the safety of the Crown, and the connexion of Ireland with Great Britain." But this proposal, which in the debate was stigmatised as "dangerous and seditious," was upon a division rejected by 143 votes against 19.

It seems clear that the members of Opposition, however reduced in numbers, might have done good service in the Irish House of Commons. They might have kept a just mean between the Orangemen and the Defenders. They might have protested against outrage or oppression in whatever quarter it appeared. They might have sought to crush conspiracy in Ireland, and to repel invasion from France, while striving to promote a healing and conciliatory system of public policy.

[1] Life of Grattan by his Son, vol. iv. p. 257.

But all such considerations seem to have yielded in their minds to the superior importance of following Mr. Fox. When, in the spring of 1797, the English statesman declared his intention of seceding in great measure from the Parliament of England, Mr. Ponsonby and his few remaining friends could think of no better course than to declare that they also would secede in great measure from the Parliament of Ireland.

Grattan was not exactly of the same section, nor did he pursue exactly the same course. With higher spirit he determined that he would not retain a seat in Parliament if he ceased to fulfil its duties. Therefore, while concurring in the measure of secession, he issued an Address to his constituents, the citizens of Dublin, to announce that at the approaching General Election (it took place in the summer of 1797) he should decline to offer himself again a candidate. That the object of this Address was lofty-minded scarcely need be stated; that its language was imprudent was afterwards acknowledged by himself. "It was well written," said he, twenty years later, "but it tended to inflame."[2] His colleague in the representation of Dublin, Lord Henry Fitzgerald, took the same course, and refused to stand again.

Nor was it only from Parliament that Grattan retired. Partly because his health had become impaired, and partly because he disapproved the military system pursued by General Lake as Commander of the Northern District, he threw up his post in a Corps of

[2] Memoirs of Grattan by his Son, vol. iv. p. 346.

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Yeomanry, which, on its recent formation, he had joined. Thus it happened that in the stirring and momentous period which ensued—the most stirring and momentous in the recent history of Ireland—the great patriot, the foremost Irish politician of that period, took no part at all. Scarcely could he have been more secluded from his country's affairs, had he been already laid in his honoured tomb at Westminster Abbey.

The General Election in the summer of 1797 made little alteration in the strength of parties. From the immense majority in favour of the Government measures, and from the continued absence of the Opposition chiefs, the proceedings in Parliament lost greatly of their interest. Public attention began to turn from the speeches within to the events without the walls. There the two hostile colours, Green and Orange, stood as before in fierce array against each other. There a bloody conflict between them was sometimes experienced, and always apprehended. There each party, as though conscious of the coming struggle, was busy in recruiting new adherents.

At this period the confederacy of the United Irishmen was governed by a secret Directory. Like the French, which it took for its model, and with which it sought to act in concert, it consisted of five persons, namely, Mr. Arthur O'Connor, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Mr. Oliver Bond, Dr. MacNevin, and Mr. Thomas Addis Emmett. Of these, in rank and importance, Lord Edward was the foremost. Born in 1763, the fifth son of the Duke of Leinster, he had entered the army at an early age. But going to Paris in the autumn of 1792,

he had eagerly imbibed the new Republican doctrines. This appears the less surprising when we find who was his host. He writes of himself as follows, in October: "I lodge with my friend Paine; we breakfast, dine, and sup together. The more I see of his interior the more I like and respect him."[3] Next month he attended a public banquet given by some English at Paris to celebrate the victories achieved by the armies of France. Toasts of a truly fraternising character were then proposed and drank. In consequence Lord Edward Fitzgerald was, in his own phrase and according, it would seem, to his own expectation, "scratched out of the army" in England. About the same time he married Pamela, an adopted daughter of Madame de Genlis, and as was commonly thought not unconnected in kindred with the Duke of Orleans. He returned to Ireland with his young bride early in 1793. As Member for the county of Kildare he took a zealous part in the House of Commons against the measures of "the Castle." Yet he was far from concurring heartily with his Opposition friends. Of Conolly, his uncle by marriage, and of Grattan, he in the course of the ensuing year writes as follows: "Conolly's Militia has frightened him; he swears they are all Republicans, as well as every man in the north. He concludes all his speeches with cursing Presbyterians. He means well and honestly, dear fellow! but his line of proceeding is wrong. Grattan I can make nothing of. His speech last night on the

[3] Letter to his mother, October 30, 1792. Biography by Moore, vol. i. p. 170. See also at p. 176 a passage in a subsequent but undated letter.

Address was very bad, and the worst doctrine ever laid down. . . . . It is in vain to look to Parliament for anything, and if the people do not help themselves, why they must suffer."[4]

With these views, however, Lord Edward Fitzgerald did not at once engage with the conspirators. It was not till after the beginning of the year 1796 that he, in connexion with Arthur O'Connor, Emmett, and MacNevin, joined the ranks of the United Irishmen.[5] That junction once effected, he became one of their leaders at home, and once also, as I have elsewhere shown, one of their envoys abroad. Of a frank, open countenance, and with engaging manners, Lord Edward had many of those generous and imprudent qualities which mark his countrymen; and his name, especially as surrounded with the halo of a mournful and untimely fate, is to this day popular in Ireland, even with those who dissent most widely from the course which he pursued.

The most leading men in the Irish Government at this time were not perhaps either the Lord Lieutenant or the Chief Secretary. Earl Camden and Mr. Thomas Pelham were both men of excellent intentions and fair official aptitude; but beside them stood a sterner and a bolder spirit—the Chancellor, John Fitzgibbon, now Earl of Clare.

With men of this energy arrayed on opposite sides—in defence of the Government, or in conspiracy against

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[4] To his mother, January 23, 1794.

[5] Life by Moore, vol. i. p. 260.

it—the whole of the year 1797 was marked by painful and irritating scenes. There was a newspaper at Belfast, the 'Morning Star,' noted beyond all others in Ireland for its incitements to sedition and its scurrilous abuse of the loyal party. On the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act the proprietors, Robert and William Simms, had been committed to Newgate. But their imprisonment did not, as was expected, arrest the progress of the paper nor yet mitigate its tone. The justifiable resentment which it provoked was vented in unjustifiable means. By superior orders, a party of soldiers issued one morning from the barracks at Belfast, attacked the printing office, and demolished every part of it. The mischievous paper was suppressed, but the mischievous spirit remained. Two other papers, the 'Union Star' and the 'Press,' were sent forth on nearly the same principles and by nearly the same persons. Each of these papers was printed only on one side of the sheet, so as to admit of being pasted on the walls by night, and to serve as a placard for the common people. It was in the columns of the 'Press,' of which one Peter Finnerty was nominal editor, that Thomas Moore, as we learn from himself, made his first essay as a writer of prose.

Public prosecutions almost of necessity ensued. In October, 1797, William Orr was hanged at Carrickfergus for having administered treasonable oaths. For an alleged libel, reflecting on that execution, Peter Finnerty was brought to trial at Dublin. He was defended with much eloquence by Mr. Curran; but being found Guilty, was sentenced to stand in the

pillory for one hour and to be imprisoned for two years.[6]

With these judicial proceedings were combined military measures. In March, 1797, a Proclamation was issued by General Lake requiring all persons in his district — that is, in the five northern counties — to surrender their arms. As to the weapons that might remain concealed, the Proclamation invited the aid of informers, promising inviolable secrecy and a reward to the full value of the arms that might be seized.

In the May ensuing the same object was enforced upon the entire kingdom in a Proclamation from the Lord Lieutenant. His Excellency here denounced the traitorous conspiracy of the United Irishmen aiming to subvert the authority of both King and Parliament. In furtherance of their purposes, he said, they have frequently assembled in unusual numbers, under the colourable pretence of planting potatoes, attending funerals, and the like; and when thus assembled in large armed bodies, they have—thus the Proclamation continued—plundered of arms the houses of many of the King's loyal subjects; they have cut down and carried away great numbers of trees wherewith to make handles of pikes and other offensive weapons; they have attempted to disarm several Yeomanry corps; they have fired upon several bodies of the King's regular troops. Therefore all persons were strictly charged to give up their pikes and pike-heads,

[6] See Howell's State Trials, vol. xxvi. p. 900-1019.

their guns and swords, and to use their best endeavours to discover those in the possession of others; and, since some men might have joined the traitorous societies either in ignorance or from intimidation, a full pardon was promised to all, not themselves guilty of felony, who should by a certain day surrender themselves and take the oaths of allegiance.

There is no reason to believe that in this document or in others of that time Lord Camden exaggerates in any manner the outrages of the United Irishmen; but it is equally certain that outrages might also be imputed to the other side. It is just to state that, at this period, there were acts of violence committed not merely by the peasants against the yeomanry and soldiers, but also by the yeomanry and soldiers against the peasants. It is just to remember the excesses of one party as the only possible palliation to the excesses of the other.

From time to time, moreover, the Government was enabled, by the help of informers, to seize seditious papers and arrest suspected persons. Thus, at Belfast, the entire managing Committee on the part of the United Irishmen was at one time apprehended. We find Wolfe Tone in his journal again and again lament that some of his trusted and valued friends—those on whose assistance he had mainly relied in the event of a French landing—were now shut up in prison.[7] In like manner Arthur O'Connor also had been arrested, but after a brief confinement was released.

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[7] See for example the entries of October 29 and November 7, 1796.

Thus, at the beginning of 1798, everything in Ireland was dark and lowering, everything foreshowed the coming storm. Loyalists upon the one side, conspirators upon the other, growing daily more embittered, seemed equally inclined to spurn all measures of conciliation. Yet still there was a statesman who to the last strove against hope to mediate between them. There was a statesman who, like Fox and Ponsonby, was a member of the Opposition, but who, unlike them, did not at a period of public danger rank secession and retirement in the list of his public duties. That statesman was the Earl of Moira. As a soldier, still bearing the title of Lord Rawdon, he had achieved high distinction in the American war. On his return he had received an English, and, ten years later, inherited an Irish peerage. As a Peer and as a proprietor of Ireland he had soon become popular in that country. There was even at one time the idea that he might be appointed either its Commander in Chief or its Lord Lieutenant. He seldom took part in the debates, and brought to them no great gift of eloquence, but an Irish warmth of heart, and a weight justly due to his character and services.

But there was one incident which, at this period, gave especial value and importance to Lord Moira's words. He was known to possess the entire confidence of the Prince of Wales; he was known to express the exact sentiments for the time of His Royal Highness. It was probably through his counsels that the Prince had recently offered to the Ministers to undertake, on conciliatory principles, the post of Lord Lieutenant for

his father. The offer had been declined, as was natural, from the Prince's circumstances and connexions; but it came to be known, or at least believed, by the public.[8]

It was in this position of affairs that Lord Moira brought the state of Ireland before the British Legislature. He did so with much earnestness and on two occasions, first in March, and then again in November, 1797. "My Lords," he said, "in such a contest as we are engaged in, I am astonished that any part of the kingdom should be suffered to hang like a dead weight upon the rest. . . . . I will not on the present occasion discuss the heart-burnings which have reduced Ireland to her present calamitous condition. I may discuss them elsewhere; but in lamenting them, I will state that, to my conviction, these discontents arose from a mistaken application of severities. I have myself been a witness in Ireland to cases of the most absurd as well as most disgusting tyranny."

Lord Moira was in both these debates answered by Lord Grenville; and, failing of success in England, next, in February, 1798, renewed the question in the Irish House of Lords. His speech was heard with deep attention, and the House from an early hour was thronged. He began by complaining of some misrepresentations of his speeches in the British Parliament. "But," he cried, "according to the remark of some writer, slander is like the mephitic vapour of the *Grotto del Cane* at Naples,—it suffocates an animal who grovels, but cannot reach the man who

[8] History of Ireland, by Francis Plowden, vol. ii. p. 388, ed. 1809.

walks upright!" Next he proceeded to descant on the wrongs of his native country and the oppression of its rulers. Nor did he neglect a slight tribute, in passing, to the rising virtues of the Heir Apparent. "Were Ireland," he said, "but cordially united, I should care little for the most powerful forces that France could send over to invade us; in a fortnight not a man of them would exist, except as a prisoner." His motion did not propose any specific measures; but in speeches he urged, as the two cardinal points of redress, Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary Reform.

To answer such a speech and from such a quarter seemed no easy task; yet, hard as it seemed, it was not too hard for Lord Chancellor Clare. In a most able and impressive oration—widely celebrated at the time both in Ireland and England—he not only replied to, but retorted on the Earl of Moira. If, he said, conciliation is to be regarded as a pledge of national tranquillity, no nation in Europe has had so fair a trial as the Irish. For almost twenty years has the system of conciliation been steadily pursued. First there were the commercial concessions of Lord North; then the legislative equality of 1782; then the relaxation of the Penal Code; and then the Roman Catholic franchise. What had been so far the result? The formation of seditious societies; the system of midnight robbery and outrage; the orders from the Jacobin clubs at Dublin and Belfast to levy regiments of National Guards with the French uniform and French pass-words; the league of the United Irishmen; the determination, frankly avowed, to accept no redress from Parliament; the

desire, scarcely concealed, to separate from England. Here, then, was a complete Revolutionary Government organized against the law. Was such a combination to be met and counteracted, much less dissolved, by the slow and technical forms of regular authority? Far, then, from granting, as Lord Moira had contended, that the Proclamation of Lord Camden to disarm the people was illegal, the Chancellor maintained that it was not only called for by the public interest, but strictly within the bounds of law.

But Lord Moira had gone into particular instances. Lord Moira had declared that he could vouch for the loyalty of his own town of Ballinahinch, in Downshire. Yet in this very town of Ballinahinch the people, when summoned by General Lake, refused to give up their arms until he had recourse to threats; the arms were then surrendered, and among them no inconsiderable number of pikes. Were pikes constitutional arguments for Parliamentary Reform? Were they emblems of loyalty? Or were they the dutiful and affectionate offerings of Lord Moira's tenantry to the rising virtues of the Heir Apparent?[9]

It was a great misfortune to Ireland—continued the Chancellor, and in this he spoke with perfect truth—that the people of England knew less of it than perhaps of any nation in Europe. The Irish, on their part, were exceedingly open to seduction; little civilized, he said, and of all others the most dangerous to tamper with or

[9] On the "loyal" town of Ballinahinch see the clever song (ascribed to Mr. Canning) in the Poetry of the Anti-Jacobin (July 9, 1798).

make experiments upon. Nor should any experiments be hazarded at a crisis so awful as was then impending. The first step towards tranquillizing Ireland must be to crush rebellion. No measure of conciliation would satisfy the league of the United Irishmen short of a pure democracy established by the influence and guaranteed by the power of the French Republic.

The motion of Lord Moira after a long debate was rejected by a large majority—45 votes against 11. Had it been carried, it is difficult to fancy that any happier result would have ensued. If Lord Moira had spoken truth, so had Lord Clare likewise. If there were long-standing grievances, there was also a rebellion close at hand, and the former could scarcely be redressed in the very presence of the latter. Perhaps it may be thought that in 1798 Ireland had lapsed into such a state as to admit of no measure altogether safe or altogether satisfactory. Cardinal de Retz in one passage of his Memoirs states that he has sometimes noticed those periods of helpless crisis in human affairs, and has always found that they proceeded not from the accidents or mischances of fortune, but rather from the faults and errors of mankind.[1]

At the beginning of 1798, and in the state to which the country had been brought, it became clear to the secret Directory at the head of the United Irishmen that with or without French succour a rising of their

[1] " . . . . les conjonctures dans lesquelles on ne peut plus faire que des fautes. J'ai observé que la fortune ne met jamais les hommes en cet état. . . . . et que personne n'y tombe que ceux qui s'y précipitent par leur faute."—*Mémoires*, vol. i. p. 149, ed. 1817.

body could not be much longer delayed. To press for that succour with as little delay as possible, they determined to send one of their own number to Paris. Arthur O'Connor undertook this perilous task. He travelled in a military disguise, and called himself Colonel Morris. With him went a Roman Catholic priest who had been to France before on the like errand; his real name was O'Coigley, or more commonly Quigley, but for concealment he called himself sometimes Fivey and sometimes Captain Jones. With them there were also John Binns, well known as the agent of the Corresponding Society, and two confederates of meaner rank, who acted as servants. From London they proceeded to Whitstable, and thence to Margate, pretending to be smugglers, and bargaining for a boat across the Channel. But their design had been suspected, and their journey tracked from London. Two active officers, or as they were then termed "runners" of Bow Street, with the aid of some local police, succeeded on the 28th of February in arresting all the five. Their papers also were seized, and were found to contain some secret correspondence serving both to reveal their projects and identify their persons. They were first brought to London and examined before the Duke of Portland as Secretary of State, but as having been captured within the county of Kent they were subsequently removed for trial to Maidstone.

In Dublin also a clue was obtained to the chief conspirators. An informer, Thomas Reynolds by name, was found. He gave exact intelligence of a meeting of the leaders to be held at the house of Mr. Oliver Bond

on the 12th of March. Major Swan, a magistrate for the county of Dublin, armed with a warrant from the Secretary's office and attended by thirteen serjeants of police in plain clothes, knocked at the door at the time appointed, and they were at once let in by means of the pass-words which they had obtained from Reynolds. Thus were they able to take into custody, besides Oliver Bond himself all the persons assembled at his house. They found moreover a great variety of secret papers, chiefly Returns of force from the Officers of the United Irishmen, and lists of revolutionary toasts. Of these last the following was perhaps the most significant:—"Mother Erin, dressed in green ribbons by a French milliner, if she cannot be dressed without her!"

It so chanced that three of the principal leaders, Lord Edward Fitzgerald, Dr. MacNevin, and Mr. Emmett, had not gone to the meeting at Bond's. In the first instance, therefore, they remained at large. But separate warrants being issued against them, MacNevin and Emmett were in a short time apprehended. Lord Edward alone continued to elude pursuit. During nearly a month he was concealed in the house of a widow lady on the banks of the canal near Dublin. So long as it was possible, there had been every anxiety to spare him. A few days before the arrests of the 12th of March, the Chancellor, Lord Clare, had said to one of Lord Edward's nearest relatives, "For God's sake get this young man out of the country; the ports shall be thrown open to you, and no hindrance whatever offered."[2]

[2] Moore's Life of Fitzgerald, vol. ii. p. 58.

From the house of the widow lady beyond the suburbs, Lord Edward on some suspicion of discovery came back to Dublin. He took refuge at last with a dealer in feathers, named Murphy, in Thomas Street. But he did not always, as would have been prudent, confine himself within doors. Thus on one occasion he went out in woman's clothes, and paid a visit—a parting visit as it proved—to his wife. Meanwhile he was still looked to as a leader. It was whispered that his standard should be raised through the province of Leinster, and the rebellion be commenced at least, if not continued, in his name. Under such circumstances, the Government, on the 11th of May, issued a Proclamation offering a reward of 1000*l.* for his discovery. Some secret information speedily ensued. The magistrates learnt the place of his concealment, and took their measures accordingly. A party was formed, consisting of Major Sirr, Major Swan, Captain Ryan, and eight soldiers. These on the 19th of May suddenly entered the house of Mr. Murphy and surprised Lord Edward still in his dressing-jacket and lying on his bed. Though surprised, he made a desperate resistance with pistols and poniards, both inflicting and receiving several dangerous wounds. Finally he was secured and carried off to prison. But the result proved fatal to one of his assailants as well as to himself: Captain Ryan died of his wounds, as a few days afterwards did Lord Edward also.

The arrest of the leaders on the 12th of March gave the Government some hopes of crushing in the bud the intended insurrection. Fresh orders were issued by the Commander-in-Chief requiring the people to give up

their arms; and if these were withheld, commanding the troops to make every exertion to discover and seize them. By such exertion a great number of weapons was actually secured—not less than 48,000 guns and 70,000 pikes.[3] But in obtaining that result a course of great severity and sometimes great cruelty was pursued. Rigour was shown especially to those, the members of the United Irishmen League, who, as a mark of distinction among themselves, had cut short their hair, and who in consequence were usually termed "the Croppies." Many of these unhappy men underwent the military punishments of the lash and the picket—this last consisting in being made to stand with one foot upon a pointed stake. Others, as is alleged, had a rope drawn round their necks and were nearly strangled to extort a confession of their hidden arms. As some slight, but very far indeed from adequate palliation of these cruelties, it should be mentioned that several persons who when first taken into custody denied with solemn oaths all knowledge of concealed instruments of war, subsequently under the pressure of bodily pain made disclosures of considerable stores.

Grievous, most grievous, were now the wrongs on either side. The soldiers were frequently fired at in the dark, or from dykes and hedges. They were sought to be assailed when single or unarmed. On the other hand, when allowed to live at free-quarters in the disaffected districts, and when exasperated by what

[3] Report of the Secret Committee of the House of Commons in Ireland, August, 1798, Appendix No. 39.

they deemed the cowardly attacks upon them, they perhaps could not be, and certainly they were not, restrained from acts of outrage. Many cottages were burned to the ground; many more were exposed to havoc and pillage of property. Military law, or rather military licence without law, stood forth in all its naked deformity.

At length, in the months of May and June, burst forth the long-smouldering flames. There were insurrections of the peasantry in various parts of the northern, the eastern, and the southern provinces. Connaught alone remained quiet. The leaders being in arrest or in concealment, there was no central guidance, no military combination. Instead of these there prevailed —and, unhappily, not on one side alone—the spirit of revenge and the hope of havoc. To trace in detail the scenes that now ensued would be a task of no pleasure and small profit. There was little variety in either the circumstances or the result. In all there was the same fierce outbreak; in nearly all the same fierce repression.

Some districts in Leinster were the first to rise. The mail-coaches in various directions close to Dublin were stopped and plundered, while no effort was neglected to assist the conspirators within the city. But these last were kept down by a strong hand, and the rebels outside were encountered in the open field. Kildare, Naas, Hacket's-town, and other places became the scenes of conflict. But Prosperous was the only place where the rebels achieved any considerable success. They surprised the small town in the middle of the

night, and put to the sword almost to a man the few soldiers by whom it was defended. On this occasion their leader was John Esmonde, the younger son of Sir Thomas Esmonde, of an old Roman Catholic family. He was a physician, and also a Lieutenant of the Clane-town Corps of Yeomanry. He had dined with his brother officers at the Mess the evening before, and next morning joined his troop on march as though nothing had happened, with his dress unsoiled and his demeanour unembarrassed. But secret intelligence of the doings at Prosperous had already reached his Captain. He was immediately arrested, subsequently brought to trial, found guilty, and hanged.[4]

In Ulster, contrary to the expectation on both sides, the risings were slight and few. Belfast, which had been the very focus of the conspiracy, was almost untouched by the rebellion. Perhaps of all the places in this province the most tainted with treason was the lately vaunted and "most loyal" town of Ballinahinch. Antrim was surrounded and attacked by a large body of insurgents; and Lord O'Neil, who lived in the immediate neighbourhood, was dragged from his horse and mortally wounded. There were two actions fought; the one at Saintsfield, the other in Lord Moira's own domain; the rebels on both occasions being put to the rout. Several of their chiefs were seized and executed; and the rebellion in this quarter was suppressed within the week.

But the real conflict was in Wexford county. There

[4] Musgrave's History of the Rebellion, vol. i. p. 288-298. See also at vol. ii. p. 303, the affidavit of Thomas Davis of Prosperous.

a large body of peasants had gathered at the bidding of Father John Murphy, curate of Bonvalogue. This man had gained a vast ascendency over the ignorant multitude. He declared to them that by the special favour of Providence he had been made invulnerable, and used after any action to show them bullets which he said that he had caught in his hands. His followers were already four thousand strong, and had taken post along the hill of Oulart on the morning of Whit Sunday the 27th of May. Here Lieutenant Foote, with only one hundred and ten men of the North Cork Militia, imprudently advanced against them. As might have been expected, the militiamen were both defeated and put to the sword, only the commander himself and four privates being spared.

This easy victory added fuel to the flame. The rebels marched in triumph to Ferns, and, with shouts against "the heretics," set fire to the Bishop's Palace, from which the Bishop had in time escaped. Thence they turned to Enniscorthy, a town of no inconsiderable commerce on the river Slaney; it was defended by three hundred soldiers, with some assistance from the townsmen. On the 28th they were attacked, and there was a conflict of some hours, but, the town being fired by the assailants in several places, the Royalists at last were driven out, and a dreadful scene of conflagration and slaughter ensued.

At these tidings the Royalists in Wexford saw that they could no longer maintain their post. The officer in command, Lieutenant-Colonel Maxwell, retired from the town, into which, on the 30th of May, the rebels

marched. They threw open the prison-gates and set free Mr. Bagenal Harvey, a Protestant gentleman of good family and fortune. He was known to be a favourer of the Rebel cause, and as such had been put in arrest by the Government party. So had been, also, two other gentlemen of landed property in that district, Mr. John Colclough and Mr. Edward Fitzgerald, but these last had been released on bail the day before. All three gentlemen now joined the insurgent force, and were proclaimed among its leaders. It was also joined by another Protestant of large property, Mr. Cornelius Grogan, of Johnstown: he was, however, old and timid, and afterwards claimed to have acted from compulsion.

For their command the rebels now appointed no single leader, but a Committee of seven persons, with Mr. Bagenal Harvey as President. Day by day they received large accessions of force from the neighbouring peasantry. They were joined also by several priests. Their principal camp was on some high ground, called Vinegar Hill, which overlooked the town of Enniscorthy, though on the opposite side of the Slaney. Their force, which ere long became fifteen thousand strong, and which was still increasing, took the title of "United Army of Wexford," and, by the exhortations of some priests of the lower class, was inflamed to fanatic fury against that very faith which their own adopted chief professed.

The fanaticism of this rebel army was evinced above all by their treatment of the Protestant prisoners. These were led forth day after day to be put to death

in cold blood, and with every circumstance of savage cruelty. Where for any reason the execution was deferred until the morrow, the persecutors meanwhile took possession of the victims, and gratified themselves by the infliction of the lash. It is impossible to suppose that the better priests in the rebel camp took any, even the smallest, share in these atrocities. As little, of course, can we impute them to the Protestant chiefs. The truth is, as one of the Committee, Mr. Edward Fitzgerald, subsequently owned to the Under Secretary of State, that "he and the other leaders had but little command; that the mob were furious, and wanting to massacre every Protestant; and that the only means they had of dissuading them from burning houses was (to tell them) that they were destroying their own property!" Fitzgerald added, "that at first his men fought well, but latterly would not stand at all."[5]

At this time Sir Ralph Abercromby was no longer Commander-in-Chief in Ireland. He and Lord Camden had differed in judgment so often and so strongly, that it was deemed requisite to recall the former. In the opinion of Lord Cornwallis, Abercromby had been "exceedingly wrong-headed."[6] His recall, however, led the Cabinet to review with the utmost anxiety the whole question of the Government of Ireland. It seemed most desirable, with a rebellion bursting forth, to concentrate all the powers of the State in a single and that an able hand. Lord Cornwallis seemed at

[5] See in the Cornwallis Correspondence the letter of Mr. E. Cooke, dated July 24, 1798.

[6] To General Ross, March 30 1798.

that time the only person to fulfil the required conditions. Accordingly he was pressed in the warmest terms to undertake the arduous duty. This pressure upon him he had from the first foreseen. "I expect to be most violently attacked (to go)"—thus he writes to his private friend—"What shall I, what can I do?" His own feelings were repugnant to the task; for, as we find him state a little later, "the life of a Lord Lieutenant of Ireland comes up to my idea of perfect misery."[7] But his sense of the public service prevailed. He went to Ireland both as Lord Lieutenant and Commander-in-Chief, and with the full confidence of Mr. Pitt and the Duke of Portland. He was empowered to issue an amnesty as soon as possible, and instructed to repress by all the means in his power the spirit of vengeance at the close of the civil war.

It was not until the 20th of June that Lord Cornwallis arrived at Dublin. By that time the arrangements for attacking the rebels in Wexford were completed, and on the very point of execution. In these arrangements, accordingly, he took no further share.

The Secretary for Ireland at this period was still nominally Mr. Thomas Pelham. But in consequence of illness he had been for some time past detained in England, and the duties of his office had been discharged by Robert Stewart, Lord Castlereagh. This statesman, who subsequently played so eminent a part in his country's annals, was the eldest son of the Earl of Londonderry, and not yet twenty-nine years of age.

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[7] To General Ross, March 30 and July 1, 1798.

"I have every reason"—thus writes Lord Cornwallis to his confidential friend—"to be highly satisfied with Lord Castlereagh. He is really a very uncommon young man, and possesses talents, temper, and judgment suited to the highest stations."[8] Indeed so well convinced was the new Lord Lieutenant of the merits of his Secretary, that when, a few months later, Mr. Pelham resigned, Lord Cornwallis at once solicited and obtained the permanent appointment of Lord Castlereagh.

But before I now proceed to the close of the Wexford insurrection and to the measures of the Cornwallis Vice-Royalty, I must revert to some intervening events in England. The trial of the Irish prisoners, Arthur O'Connor and James O'Coigley, together with their English confederates, commenced at Maidstone on the 21st of May. The Attorney-General, Sir John Scott, and the Solicitor-General, Sir John Mitford, appeared on the part of the Crown. For the prisoners the leading counsel was Mr. Plumer, subsequently Master of the Rolls. By several witnesses their whole progress to Maidstone was accurately traced, and the papers found in their possession were produced. On the other hand, Arthur O'Connor called as witnesses to his character and principles the chiefs of the Opposition in England. Fox, Sheridan, and Erskine, Lord John Russell, the Duke of Norfolk, and the Earl of Thanet appeared in his behalf. But strongest of all was the evidence of Grattan, who came from Ireland expressly

[8] To General Ross, July 9, 1798.

for this purpose. He declared that he had been well acquainted with Mr. O'Connor since the year 1792; that he had the means of forming a judgment on his political opinions; and that he had never heard him express any which could lead to the supposition that he would favour an invasion of his country. Considering the notoriety of the course which Arthur O'Connor had pursued in Irish politics, the excessive candour—if it was such—of Mr. Grattan may well excite surprise.

It was natural, however, that such testimony should have great weight with the Maidstone jury. At the conclusion of the trial they found O'Coigley Guilty, but acquitted O'Connor, as also the two other prisoners. Previous to the verdict, O'Connor had been apprised that a police-officer was in court with a warrant to apprehend him on another charge. Nevertheless, no sooner had the verdict been pronounced than O'Connor stepped from the box in which he stood with the other prisoners, and attempted to go free. One of his witnesses, Lord Thanet, and one of his counsel, Mr. Robert Ferguson, took his part, and attempted to aid his escape; but after some scuffle and confusion the officers prevailed, and the prisoner was again secured.

For this offence Lord Thanet and Mr. Ferguson were, in the following year, brought to trial and found Guilty, notwithstanding a most able defence by Mr. Erskine. They were sentenced to fine and imprisonment; the fine upon Lord Thanet of a thousand, and that upon Mr. Ferguson of a hundred pounds; the Earl to be confined for one year in the Tower; the Barrister for the same period in the King's Bench prison.

For Arthur O'Connor, he was detained in custody several months longer, but at last on confession of his guilt was permitted to retire to France. There he obtained a commission in the army, and rose to the rank of Lieutenant-General, but was not employed after 1803. He attained a green old age, surviving till April, 1852. His brother, Roger O'Connor, had been, like himself, arrested for High Treason, but after some delay was also, like himself, released and sent abroad. This gentleman was the father by his second marriage of Feargus O'Connor, well known in our own times by his Chartist opinions and his representation of Nottingham.

On the 7th of June O'Coigley underwent the sentence of the law on Penenden Heath. On being taken from the gaol at Maidstone he was seated upon a hurdle drawn by two horses, and escorted to the place of execution by a body of two hundred volunteers. He was first hanged and then beheaded; and the executioner, holding out the head to the multitude, cried in the appointed form: "This is the head of a traitor." But the other more revolting practices enjoined by the ancient law of High Treason had been previously remitted by the King. O'Coigley was attended by a Roman Catholic priest, and maintained to the last great fortitude and calmness.

CHAPTER XXVI.

1798.

Measures of national defence — Fox's speech at the Whig Club — His name struck from the Privy Council — Duel between Pitt and Tierney — Wilberforce's notice of motion against duelling — Dissuaded by Pitt from pressing it — Ill health of Pitt — Bonaparte reduces Malta, and lands in Egypt — Battle of the Nile — Surrender of Minorca — English Militia Regiments sent to Ireland — Action at Vinegar Hill — Execution of rebel leaders — Excesses of Militia and Yeomanry — Conciliatory course of Lord Cornwallis — General Humbert lands at Killala — Attacks General Lake at Castlebar — Surrender of Humbert — Trial of Napper Tandy — Action in Killala Bay — Trial and suicide of Wolfe Tone — His Diaries and Correspondence.

THE British Parliament was at this time busily employed on measures of national defence. A Message from the King on the 20th of April had announced "considerable and increasing activity in the ports of France, Flanders, and Holland, with the avowed design of attempting the invasion of His Majesty's dominions," and had called for "such further measures as may enable His Majesty to defeat the wicked machinations of disaffected persons." An Alien Bill was at once introduced by the Government, as also a Bill for the suspension of the Habeas Corpus. Both were opposed in the House of Commons, but with very slight result. Thus, on the Suspension Bill, Sheridan, who led the resistance, found on the general principle only six other members willing to divide with him.[1]

[1] Parl. Hist., vol. xxxiii. p. 1431.

Fox took no part in these debates. His familiar letters at this time express the utmost aversion to resume his Parliamentary duties. Thus in March he had written to his nephew: "I should dislike to a degree I cannot express to attend again myself; indeed, if there is a point upon which I cannot bring myself to give way, it is this; but I am far from wishing others to do the same."[2] But Fox was by no means equally unwilling to attend the meetings of the Whig Club. There, at the beginning of May, he made a speech, using some inflammatory language, and repeating the Duke of Norfolk's toast—to the Sovereignty of the People. A great stir ensued. Many friends and some colleagues of Pitt pressed for a public prosecution or a Parliamentary reprimand. Pitt, on the other hand, appears to have thought that such steps would be "giving Mr. Fox too much consequence."[3] We find him in a private letter consult Dundas upon the subject:—

"Downing Street, Saturday, May 5, 1798.

"DEAR DUNDAS,

. . . . . .

"Our friends are very eager for some Parliamentary notice of Fox's speech. The objection to prosecuting him is certainly very great from the chance of an acquittal and a triumph, but it has been suggested that he might be ordered to attend, and if he avows the speech, might be reprimanded by the Speaker. If he disavows

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[2] Correspondence, vol. iii. p. 144.

[3] There is a story upon this subject (but given doubtfully) in a later entry of Lord Malmesbury's Journal (May 8, 1804).

it, the printer might be prosecuted with success. If after a reprimand he offers a new insult (as he probably would at the next meeting of the Club), he might be sent to the Tower for the remainder of the Session, which would assert the authority of the House as much as expulsion, and save the inconvenience of a Westminster contest. Pray let me know in the course of to-morrow what you think. I shall be here in the morning, but go with Long to Bromley to dinner.

"Yours ever,
"W. PITT."

Finally, after full deliberation, it was determined that no step should be taken against Fox, except to strike his name from the Privy Council. On the 9th of May accordingly, a Board of Privy Council being held at St. James's, Mr. Faulkner, as Clerk of the Council, presented the list to the King, when His Majesty with his own hand drew his pen across the name of Mr. Fox.

Fox himself in his private letters refers to this event with great equanimity. "I believe," he says, "the late Duke of Devonshire is the only instance in this reign of a Privy Councillor being turned out in England; and the more the circumstances of the two cases shall appear exactly similar, the better I shall like it." Lord John Russell has justly remarked that this sentiment is singular, since the Minister who in 1762 turned out the Duke of Devonshire was Mr. Fox's father.[4] Fox adds: "I wish I knew whether it is necessary I should

[4] Note to Fox's Correspondence, vol. iii. p. 280.

go to Court; I had much rather not, but would do in this as is thought right."

On Friday, the 25th of May, Pitt brought in a Bill for the more effectual manning of the Navy, and gave reasons why it was expedient that this Bill should pass through all its stages in one day. Mr. Tierney, not without some warmth, opposed this, as he termed it, precipitate course. "The Hon. gentleman," said Pitt, in reply, "would have long notice given of the present motion, and would retard its progress through the House. He acknowledges that were it not passed in a day, those whom it concerned might elude its effect, thus assigning himself the reason for its immediate adoption. But if the measure be necessary, and that a notice of it would enable its effect to be eluded, how can the Hon. gentleman's opposition to it be accounted for but from a desire to obstruct the defence of the country?"

At this point, however, Tierney rose to Order. "This language," he said, "is surely not Parliamentary. I appeal to the Chair for protection."

The Speaker, thus appealed to, said that whatever tended to cast a personal imputation for words spoken in debate was certainly disorderly and unparliamentary. It was for the Right Hon. gentleman to explain his meaning. Then Pitt rose again, and haughtily declared that he must adhere to his words, which he repeated. And whilst he would freely submit his arguments to the judgment of the House, "I must say," he added, "that I will neither retract from, nor further explain, my former expressions."

The result of this haughty determination on the part of Mr. Pitt was a challenge on the morrow, Saturday the 26th, from Mr. Tierney. It was at once accepted. Mr. Pitt apprised the Speaker of it as a personal friend, thus in honour binding him against any public interference, or any attempt to prevent the duel. Here is Lord Sidmouth's own account: "On the day afterwards, which was Saturday, I was dining with Lord Grosvenor, when a note was brought me from Mr. Pitt stating that he had received a hostile message from Mr. Tierney, and wished me to go to him, which I did as soon as the party at Lord Grosvenor's broke up. Mr. Pitt had just made his will when I arrived. He had sent in the first instance to Mr. Steele to be his second; but finding that he was absent, he sent next to Mr. Ryder. On the following day I went with Pitt and Ryder down the Birdcage Walk, up the steps, into Queen Street, where their chaise waited to take them to Wimbledon Common." [5]

Under these circumstances, then, on Sunday the 27th, at three o'clock in the afternoon, the two parties met on Putney Heath. Mr. Pitt was attended by Mr. Dudley Ryder, afterwards Lord Harrowby, and Mr. Tierney by Mr. George Walpole. The seconds had some conversation, and endeavoured to prevent further proceedings, but they did not prevail. The principals took their ground at the distance of twelve paces, and fired at the same moment; each without effect. A second case of pistols was produced and fired in the same

[5] Communicated by Lord Sidmouth to Dean Pellew. Life, vol. i. p. 205.

manner, Mr. Pitt on this last occasion firing his pistol in the air. Then the seconds jointly interfered, and insisted that the matter should go no further, "it being their decided opinion that sufficient satisfaction had been given, and that the business was ended with perfect honour to both parties."

Meanwhile the Speaker, unable to rest, mounted his horse and rode that way. He took his stand at some distance on a small hill where was a gibbet, upon which a felon named Abershaw had been lately hanged. "When I arrived on the hill," he says, "I knew from seeing a crowd looking down into the valley that the duel was then proceeding. After a time I saw the same chaise which had conveyed Pitt to the spot mounting the ascent, and riding up to it I found him safe, when he said, 'You must dine with me to-day.'"

In a note written the same evening we find Pitt in a few lines relate the event to Dundas, as in a letter next day he did also to his mother from Holwood.

"Downing Street, Sunday, 9 P.M.

"DEAR DUNDAS,

"You will perhaps hear that I had occasion to visit your neighbourhood this morning, in order to meet Mr. Tierney, in consequence of what passed between us in the House on Friday. We exchanged two shots on each side; and by the interposition of the seconds the affair ended in a way with which, I think, neither party had any reason to be dissatisfied. I am going to Long's this evening, and will dine with you to-morrow.

"Yours ever,

"W. PITT."

"Holwood, Monday, May 28, 1798.

"MY DEAR MOTHER,

"You will be glad, I know, to hear from myself on a subject in which I know how much you will feel interested, and I am very happy that I have nothing to tell that is not perfectly agreeable. The newspapers of to-day contain a short but correct account of a meeting which I found it necessary to have with Mr. Tierney yesterday, on Putney Heath, in consequence of some words which I had used in the House of Commons, and which I did not think it became me to retract or explain. The business terminated without anything unpleasant to either party, and in a way which left me perfectly satisfied both with myself and my antagonist, who behaved with great propriety. You will, I know, hear from my brother on the subject, but I could not be contented without sending these few lines from myself.

"Ever, my dear Mother, &c.,

"W. PITT."

At that period, and even down to a much later, the practice of duelling on any political or private wrong was in conformity with the public opinion and temper of the times. But in 1798, when everything depended on the life of the Prime Minister, there was a common thrill of horror at the risk which Mr. Pitt had run. Nor were there wanting some few more serious men who strongly condemned the practice on moral and religious grounds. Chief among these few was Mr. Wilberforce. In his Diary he writes as follows:—

"May 28. Ashley came in at my dressing-time, and brought word of Pitt and Tierney's duel yesterday. I more shocked than almost ever. I resolved to do

something if possible.—May 30. To town. Found people much alive about duel, and disposed to take it up. I gave notice of a motion in the House of Commons against the principle of duels."

But on the very same evening Wilberforce received a letter from Pitt, already published in the Life of the former, but which I shall here produce again.

"Downing Street, Wednesday, May 30, 1798.

"MY DEAR WILBERFORCE,

"I am not the person to argue with you on a subject in which I am a good deal concerned. I hope, too, that I am incapable of doubting your kindness to me, however mistaken I may think it, if you let any sentiment of that sort actuate you on the present occasion. I must suppose that some such feeling has inadvertently operated upon you, because, whatever may be your *general* sentiments on subjects of this nature, they can have acquired no new tone or additional argument from anything that has passed in this transaction. You must be supposed to bring this forward in reference to the individual case.

"In doing so, you will be accessary in loading one of the parties with unfair and unmerited obloquy. With respect to the other party, myself, I feel it a real duty to say to you frankly that your motion is one for my removal. If any step on the subject is proposed in Parliament and agreed to, I shall feel from that moment that I can be of more use out of office than in it; for in it, according to the feelings I entertain, I could be of none. I state to you as I think I ought distinctly and explicitly what I feel. I hope I need not repeat what I always feel personally to yourself.

"Yours ever,

"W. PITT."

It was natural that a communication so distinct and so momentous should have caused Wilberforce to waver in his purpose. We find him write:—"June 1, 1798. To town to-day and yesterday, and back in the evening. Much discussion about duel motion. Saw Pitt and others—all pressed me to give it up. Consulted Grant and Henry Thornton, and at length agreed to give it up, as not more than five or six would support me, and not more than one or two speak, and I could only have carried it so far as for preventing *Ministers* fighting duels."

On announcing his decision to the Minister, Wilberforce received in reply a few cordial lines.

"Downing Street, Saturday, 6 P.M.

"MY DEAR WILBERFORCE,

"I cannot say to you how much I am relieved by your determination, which I am sincerely convinced is right on your own principles, as much as on those of persons who think differently. Much less can I tell you how sincerely I feel your cordial friendship and kindness on all occasions, as well where we differ as where we agree.

"Ever affectionately yours,

"W. PITT."

Two days subsequently we find in the same journal: "June 4. Stayed away from Court on account of motion impending. The King asked the Speaker if I persevered. Pitt told me the King approved of his conduct."[6]

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[6] Yet the King's first impressions were certainly of at least a chequered kind. See in the Appendix his letter of the 30th of May.

During the short remainder of this Session—it closed on the 29th of June—the affairs of Ireland took up, as was natural, the largest portion of the time. In the Lords there were three separate motions on the state of the sister kingdom—from the Duke of Leinster, the Earl of Bessborough, and the Duke of Bedford. But at the desire of Lord Sydney, the Standing Order for the exclusion of strangers, which is usually allowed to lie dormant, was put in force, so that no record of these debates was preserved. If therefore there were members of the Opposition who hoped at that critical juncture to inflame the public mind by their Parliamentary harangues, that hope was altogether disappointed. And for the same reason the exclusion of strangers was equally enforced in the corresponding debates in the House of Commons. First came a motion from Mr. Sheridan, calling for a Committee on the state of Ireland. Next there was a string of resolutions from Lord George Cavendish. On this last occasion Fox emerged from his retirement, and delivered a speech of some length, which, though wholly unreported, was beyond all doubt fraught as usual with admirable eloquence. Later in the evening he moved, though without success, a separate Resolution of his own. Lord George was also supported, and most ably, by both Sheridan and Grey, but with all their exertions could muster no higher minority than sixty-six.

In the Diary of Wilberforce under the date of June 2—the same day on which Pitt addressed to him a note of thanks—there are these words, "He (Pitt) "seriously ill." The news of this illness spread quickly, and with much exaggeration. It was even alleged that

the Prime Minister had become insane. Towards the end of July, Lord Muncaster, from his house in Cumberland, wrote to Wilberforce upon the subject. "You ask me," replied Wilberforce, "concerning the report about Pitt. Altogether without foundation is my answer. Yet the Opposition papers go on with it."

Just before this answer the two friends had passed a day alone together. Here again I recur to Wilberforce's Diary. "July 16. After breakfast to Auckland; and then on to Pitt at Holwood. *Tête à tête* with Pitt, and much political talk. He much better—improved in habits also—beautifying his place with great taste—marks of ingenuousness and integrity. Resenting and spurning the bigoted fury of Irish Protestants."

The "habits" to which Wilberforce here refers as admitting of improvement were probably in the first place as to the system of hours. No longer breakfasting at nine o'clock as in his first years of office, Pitt had become the very reverse of early in the forenoon. The Speaker, Mr. Addington, describing his life about this time, says of him that he never rose before eleven, and then generally took a short ride in the Park. Any change which he made in this respect, as Wilberforce notes, was not of long continuance, and for the rest of his life Pitt was very late in his morning hours. Some have thought that the time which he passed in bed was compelled by his delicate health; others have supposed that he employed it in revolving the details of his speeches or his measures.

Secondly, it is probable that Wilberforce alludes to the large potations of port wine. These, as we have seen, were in the first instance prescribed to Mr. Pitt as a

medicine, and they gave strength to his youthful constitution. But amidst the labour of Parliament and office he certainly in some cases carried them beyond what his health could require, or could even without injury bear. Not that they had any effect on his mental powers or mental self-command. Two bottles of port, as Lord Macaulay says, were little more to him than two dishes of tea. Nothing could be rarer in his public life than any trace of excitement in his after-dinner speeches.

Here again the authority of the Speaker is quite decisive. When in long subsequent years Lord Sidmouth was questioned on the subject, he said that Mr. Pitt loved a glass of port wine very well, and a bottle still better; but that he had never known him take too much if he had anything to do, except upon one occasion, when he was unexpectedly called up to answer a personal attack made upon him by Mr. William Lambton, father of the first Lord Durham. He had left the House with Mr. Dundas in the hour between two election ballots, for the purpose of dining, and when on his return he replied to Mr. Lambton, it was evident to his friends that he had taken too much wine. The next morning, Mr. Ley, the Clerk Assistant of the House of Commons, told the Speaker that he had felt quite ill ever since Mr. Pitt's exhibition on the preceding evening. "It gave me," he added, "a violent headache." On this being repeated to Mr. Pitt—"I think," said the Minister, "that is an excellent arrangement—that I should have the wine and the Clerk the headache!"[7]

[7] Life of Lord Sidmouth, by Dean Pellew, vol. i. p. 153.

It is not to be supposed that even a single instance of the kind would be left unimproved by the wits at Brooks's. The Morning Chronicle came out with a long array of epigrams upon this tempting subject. Here is one in which the Prime Minister is supposed to address his colleague—

"I cannot see the Speaker, Hal; can you?"—
"Not see the Speaker?—hang it, I see two!"

In July of this year we find Mr. Pitt give his mother an account, probably far too favourable, of his health.

"Holwood, July 9, 1798.

"To-day's post has brought me your kind and welcome letter, and I have just time to thank you for it by the return of a messenger to town, and to assure you that I am growing stronger and stronger every day, and am as well as ever I was. I do not want to be better; but to be the more sure of continuing as well as I am, I mean soon to take a few weeks of sea air, and still more complete idleness than I have had here, at Walmer, which, next to the possibility, if it could arrive, of a visit at Burton, I shall enjoy more than any other excursion."

On the other hand we find Lord Auckland give to Mr. Beresford a very different account.

"Eden Farm, August 1, 1798.

"Yesterday I passed the day quietly at Holwood with Mr. Pitt, who set out this morning for Walmer. I trust that the sea-air will do good to him; he is greatly recovered, but is much shaken in his constitution, and must be very attentive as to diet, exercise, and hours. His spirits are as good and his mind as active as ever.

We have many and long discussions as to Ireland: it seems hardly justifiable to return merely to the old system."

On the 2nd of August, accordingly, Pitt proceeded to Walmer Castle, where he remained about a fortnight. Then he paid a visit of some days in the opposite direction, going to Burton Pynsent, but was obliged by the end of the month to return to his official post. Thus he writes to his mother from Downing-street, August 30:—"Favourable as the prospect is, I must not allow myself to regret the sacrifice I made in coming here, as it is material to be on the spot to expedite any measures which might become necessary for increasing Lord Cornwallis's force."

Next month he writes again:

"Holwood, September 16, 1798.

"I write for to-morrow's post, meaning in the morning to set out from hence to Walmer. Our good news from Ireland reached me at such a time that I could not give you the satisfaction of knowing it sooner than it was conveyed by the newspaper. The conclusion of the struggle, or rather of the pursuit, is most satisfactory, and promises the best effect in various ways. On the side of the Mediterranean our expectation, which had been almost extinguished where it was most alive by the account of Nelson's disappointment, is now suddenly awakened by reports of great armies formed, and, as some say, victories obtained over Bonaparte by the Arabs. Something of the fabulous is perhaps mixed in the relation, but if it is only true that there is resistance enough to retard his progress, the great object of his expedition will be defeated."

I shall now proceed, first to the events in the Mediterranean, and next to those in Ireland.

General Bonaparte, having on his way reduced the island of Malta, appeared off the coast of Egypt, and began to disembark his troops on the 1st of July. He was encountered by the Mamalukes, both on his landing and on his march to Cairo, and a report of their victory came, as we have seen, to England. But so far from defeating the French army, they were not even able, as Mr. Pitt had hoped, to retard its progress. General Bonaparte established his head-quarters at Cairo, and ruled the country with undisputed sway. Meanwhile he had left his fleet, commanded by Admiral Brueys, in the Bay of Aboukir, about twenty miles north-east of Alexandria. On that fleet entirely depended his power of communication and his prospect of return.

On the other side, Admiral Nelson had learnt the departure of the French armament from Toulon, but, like the rest of the world, was altogether ignorant of its destination. He had therefore pursued it at hap-hazard and in vain. He could neither prevent the capture of Malta, nor yet the landing in Egypt. He had rightly conjectured the latter as perhaps the probable object, but when he appeared off Alexandria on the 28th of June the enemy was not there, and he tried them in another direction. On the 19th of July, much in need of water and provisions, he stood towards Syracuse. It was no easy matter to obtain any supplies at that place, since the Court of Naples had bound itself to a strict neutrality. But Emma, Lady Hamilton, wife of Sir William, the English Minister at that Court, was a

personal favourite with the Queen, and obtained from Her Majesty a secret order to the Sicilian Governors. "Thanks to your exertions"—thus writes Nelson to the Hamiltons—"we have victualled and watered; and surely, watering at the fountain of Arethusa, we must have victory. We shall sail with the first breeze; and be assured I will return either crowned with laurel or covered with cypress." To his chief, Earl St. Vincent, he wrote also, and bade him be convinced that if the French were above water he would find them out.

From Syracuse Nelson sailed to the Morea, where he hoped to obtain some positive tidings. There he learnt that the French had been seen from Candia about four weeks before, steering to the south-east. Nelson at once decided to sail back to Alexandria. About ten in the morning of the 1st of August he came in sight of that port. To his great joy he saw that it was crowded with masts, and that the French tricolour was flying from the walls. Here, then, was the enemy at last!

Nelson's fleet was thirteen sail of the line, and the French had exactly the same number. But yet there was on their side a considerable superiority. In the first place, they had four frigates, and the English none, but only one fifty-gun ship. Next, the English ships of the line were all seventy-fours, while the French had two of eighty guns, and one—their Admiral's ship, the Orient—among the largest in any service, of a hundred and twenty guns.

The plan which Nelson formed, on reconnoitring the position at Aboukir, was to make his attack by doubling on the enemy's ships. His own could not be brought

within range, or in line, till late that afternoon, and the French fully expected that the battle would be delayed till the next day. But Nelson, with his characteristic ardour, commenced it a little before sunset. It continued through several hours of darkness, lit up only in flashes by the fire on each side.

From the beginning of the action the huge Orient was hotly engaged, first with the Bellerophon, and then with the Swiftsure. Within the first hour Brueys was three times wounded; the third time mortally. Still he desired not to be carried below. "A French Admiral," he said, "should die on his deck." Thus calmly did this brave man breathe his last. Had he even been unwounded, he would only have perished by another mode of death. The Orient had just been painted, and the oil-jars and paint-buckets had been carelessly left on the poop. On a sudden the ship caught fire; it was soon enveloped in flames; and about ten in the evening it blew up with a most tremendous explosion. In its ruin it caused nearly as much havoc as it ever had by its active strength. The vibration shook the neighbouring vessels to their very keels, and opened many of their seams, while fragments of the blazing mass flew far and wide, and whenever they fell on decks and rigging set them in a flame not easy to extinguish. Of the many hundred men on board the Orient, by far the greater number were blown up or drowned; only some few were saved on board the British ships. The second in command, Admiral Ganteaume, found means to throw himself into a boat and to reach the shore.

After an awe-struck pause, which continued full ten minutes, and during which not a gun was fired on either side, the conflict again commenced. Nelson, on board the Vanguard, and engaging both the Spartiate and the Aquilon, had been severely wounded. A splinter had struck him above the eye and cut the flesh from the forehead. When he was carried down to the cock-pit, the surgeon, who was just then dressing the wound of a common sailor, quitted it to attend the Admiral. "No," said Nelson; "I will take my turn with my brave fellows;"—an answer which may well deserve to stand side by side with that of Sir Philip Sidney at Zutphen.

Before daybreak the victory of the English was complete. Never was any battle more decisive than that which the French call "*le combat d'Aboukir*," but which is known to the victors as the battle of the Nile. Of the thirteen French ships of the line, one, as we have seen, perished in the flames, eight surrendered, and two, as half wrecks, were stranded on the shore. Of these, the Timoleon was set on fire and destroyed by her crew, and the Tonnant struck her flag to the English. Only two of the thirteen escaped. Thus was one of the best French armies wholly cut off from France. Thus did their recent conquest of Egypt become to them as it were a prison, from which there was no return.

In England the people knew the character of Nelson. All through the summer they had been expecting some great successes on his part. Once, in July, Lady Chatham saw or heard of the Falmouth mail-coach passing

through Taunton bedecked with laurels, and bearing, it was said, the tidings of such a victory. Pitt could not confirm the rumour; but he added, in his letter dated July 25:—

"As far as we can judge by comparing dates and circumstances, there is very good ground to hope that if Bonaparte has ventured out of Malta and has not got into Toulon, Nelson will have come up with him. If this should have been the case, the triumph will, I have little doubt, be only premature, and the coaches will in due time have a right to their laurels."

And again, August 30:—

"The reports of Nelson's success are again revived from various quarters, and will, I really believe, somehow or other, prove true at last."

When at last the authentic tidings (the first being diluted through French channels) came of the great battle of the Nile, the public joy—and not in England only—knew no bounds. Honours and rewards were showered upon Nelson by other Sovereigns besides his own. By King George he was created Baron Nelson of the Nile, with a pension of 2000*l.* a-year for three lives. The well-selected motto, *Palmam qui meruit ferat*, was chosen by Lord Grenville, from an ode of Dr. Jortin. It was commonly felt that a higher degree of rank ought to have been conferred upon him, since there had been an Earldom for the less conspicuous victory of Cape St. Vincent. When, in the November following, the grant was moved in the House of Commons, General Walpole expressed his opinion accordingly,

that a Barony was not enough for Nelson. "It is unnecessary," said Pitt, "to enter into that question. Admiral Nelson's fame will be co-equal with the British name. It will be remembered that he has obtained the greatest naval victory on record, when no man will think of asking whether he had been created a Baron, or Viscount, or an Earl." [8]

Nelson never, in fact, did attain any higher rank than that of Viscount, which was afterwards awarded him for his victory at Copenhagen. It is singular, however, that the unequal distribution of honours as between Jervis and himself has been redressed, and, as it were, reversed, by the accidents of their succession. The heir of Jervis is now a Viscount; the heir of Nelson is now an Earl.

Before the close of the same year there was another conquest in the Mediterranean, of some importance in its result, though of none in its achievement. The island of Minorca being undefended by the Spaniards, was given up to a British force under General Charles Stuart, without the loss on his part of a single man.

The rebellion in Ireland had roused the energy of the Militia in England. On the 16th of June Mr. Secretary Dundas brought down to the House of Commons a message from the King announcing that several regiments had freely tendered an extension of their services to Ireland. Mr. Dundas moved an Address in reply, which, though resisted by many members of the Opposi-

[8] I derive this passage from the Life by Southey, p. 163, ed. 1857. It has been omitted in the Parliamentary History.

tion, as Mr. Sheridan and Lord William Russell, and even by one or two friends of Government, as Mr. Bankes, was carried by a large majority. Several Militia regiments went over accordingly. It was hoped that they would do more than assist in quelling the rebellion; it was hoped that, having no personal injuries to avenge, they might check the excesses of the Militia from the sister kingdom. In many cases this result may really have ensued; in many others it is to be feared that the English Militiamen caught for the time and in some degree the contagion of the violence around them.

In Wexford my narrative left the King's troops preparing to engage the rebels almost at the very time that the new Viceroy was arriving. Lord Cornwallis landed on the 20th of June. On the same day General Moore routed one body of the armed peasants at Goff's Bridge. On the 21st at daybreak General Lake attacked their principal encampment upon Vinegar Hill. He had under him about thirteen thousand men in four separate columns, with which it was intended to assail the position simultaneously on four different sides. But the accidental delay of one of these left to the rebels a loophole for escape. For that very reason perhaps they made but a faint resistance, the whole loss of the Royal army being only one man killed and four wounded. Later in the same day the town of Wexford, which had been in the insurgents' hands ever since the 30th of last month, was re-entered by General Moore. There was no difficulty in the trial and no doubt as to the execution of the principal chiefs taken with arms in their

hands. Among them Mr. Bagenal Harvey, Mr. Colclough, and Mr. Grogan, one of the Fathers Murphy, and another Roman Catholic priest named Redmond, met the doom which they had dared.

Even after the victories of Generals Moore and Lake, the civil war was not completely at an end. There remained some thousands of the runaways from Vinegar Hill, who, armed with pikes, took shelter in the Wicklow mountains. There remained in a few other districts, as Lord Cornwallis states it (to the Duke of Portland, June 28), "deluded wretches who are wandering about in considerable bodies, and are committing still greater cruelties than they themselves suffer." These men Lord Cornwallis made every effort to reclaim. He authorised the General Officers in the several districts to issue proclamations inviting those who were still assembled to surrender themselves and forsake their leaders within fourteen days, and in that case promising certificates for their protection.

In this step, and in every other which pointed in the same direction, Lord Cornwallis found himself thwarted and withstood by the leading Irishmen around him. Here are his own words on the 8th of July to the Duke of Portland:—"The principal persons of this country and the members of both Houses of Parliament are in general averse to all acts of clemency. . . . The words *Papists* and *Priests* are for ever in their mouths, and by their unaccountable policy they would drive four-fifths of the community into irreconcilable rebellion."

To such counsels of violence—counsels in part excused by deeds of violence upon the other side—there were,

however, two signal exceptions. These it is the more necessary to state, since they have seldom in Ireland received the meed of common justice, even from that party which at the time benefited by them. The one exception was the Earl of Clare, Lord Chancellor. "My sentiments," says Lord Cornwallis in speaking of his measures of amnesty, "have coincided with those of the Chancellor, whose character has been much misrepresented in England." The other exception was Lord Castlereagh, the acting Irish Secretary. "I should be very ungrateful," says Lord Cornwallis, "if I did not acknowledge the obligations which I owe to Lord Castlereagh, whose abilities, temper, and judgment have been of the greatest use to me."

With this humane determination on the part of Lord Cornwallis, nothing could be more precise than the injunctions which in his name Lord Castlereagh had from the first conveyed. Here are his very words to Lieut.-General Stuart on the 25th of June:—"His Excellency the Lord Lieutenant highly approves of your issuing the most positive orders against the infliction of punishment under any pretence whatever not authorized by the orders of a General Officer in pursuance of the sentence of a General Court-martial." But in too many cases the Militia and Yeomanry were not to be restrained. Free quarters were freely indulged in; flogging to extort confession was often inflicted; nay, even death itself was sometimes not withheld. "These men," says Lord Cornwallis on the 24th of July, "have saved the country, but they now take the lead in rapine and murder." And in a still earlier letter he bears a

still more emphatic testimony:—"The accounts that you see of the numbers of the enemy destroyed in every action are, I conclude, greatly exaggerated. From my own knowledge of military affairs, I am sure that a very small proportion of them only could be killed in battle; and I am much afraid that any man in a brown coat who is found within several miles of the field of action is butchered without discrimination. It shall be one of my first objects to soften the ferocity of our troops, which I am afraid, in the Irish corps at least, is not confined to the private soldiers."

The conciliatory course of Lord Cornwallis was exactly conformable to the instructions of the Ministers in England. On the 4th of July the Duke of Portland in the name of the Cabinet suggested to his consideration the further propriety of passing an Act of Grace extending to all cases of sedition, but guarded by many reserves. Lord Cornwallis accordingly sent messages to both Houses at Dublin announcing that a Bill with the Royal Sign Manual would shortly be presented, granting, with certain exceptions, a general pardon to the rebels. The exceptions proved to be numerous, but they were in name rather than reality; for in practice, exclusive of the leaders, an individual pardon on certain terms was seldom refused to any person who desired to surrender or submit.

There remained, however, to the Government two objects of pressing importance: first, the disposal of the remaining State prisoners; and secondly, the resistance to a French invasion.

As to the former, the gaols of Newgate and Kilmain-

ham were crowded. There were in custody the principal planners of the late revolutionary movement, as John Mac Cann, the two Sheares, John and Henry, Thomas Emmett, Samuel Neilson, Dr. Mac Nevin, Michael Byrne, and Oliver Bond. There were some scores also of their most active partisans. The two Sheares, being brought to trial and found guilty, were executed on the 14th of July. So on the 19th was John Mac Cann. The trials of Michael Byrne and Oliver Bond had also been gone through, and had ended in a verdict of Guilty. At this point the greater part of the remaining prisoners, in number sixty-four, drew up and sent a proposal to the Government. They engaged to give important information, and to reveal all they knew, provided they were not called upon to implicate any other person by name or description. On these terms they asked that their lives should be spared, and their sentences be commuted into banishment for life. They stipulated also for the lives of Byrne and Bond.

On receiving this proposal, Lord Cornwallis saw its great importance, and was well inclined to accept it; so also was Lord Castlereagh. But they doubted whether it would be possible to find in Dublin a third man of their party who would agree with them. Here again let me quote the words of Lord Cornwallis in writing to the Duke of Portland:—"The Chancellor, who, notwithstanding all that is said of him, is by far the most moderate and right-headed man amongst us, was gone for a week to his country house for the recovery of his health, and I knew of no other of our political friends who was likely to have temper to bear even the state-

ment of the question." But Lord Cornwallis hoped to find more temper in the heads of the law. These he sent for, and in confidence consulted. To his great disappointment he found both the Chief Justices, Lord Carleton and Lord Kilwarden, as also the Attorney-General, Mr. Toler, strongly advise the rejection of the offer, pressing as usual for the utmost rigour against their countrymen. Lord Cornwallis, though with much reluctance, was obliged to yield to their representations. The "minds of people," he says, "are now in such a state, that nothing but blood will satisfy them." Michael Byrne accordingly was executed the same day.

Next morning, the 26th of July, the State prisoners, finding their first offer rejected, and dismayed at the fate of Byrne, sent in a second proposal of a more extensive nature as to confession and information, and signed by seventy-eight persons instead of sixty-four. Moreover the return of the Chancellor to Dublin entirely changed the scene. The other legal gentlemen on learning his opinion modified their own. They gave in their adhesion, and the Government thus supported determined to brave the displeasure of its general adherents. The terms of the State prisoners were accepted; all their lives were to be spared. Oliver Bond received a respite the same day, and would have been sent abroad with his fellow-captives not yet brought to trial, had he not shortly afterwards (after playing ball all the evening in prison) died suddenly of an attack of apoplexy. The other chiefs, as Emmett, Mac Nevin, and O'Connor, were examined on oath before Secret Committees of both Houses of Parliament. They gave

much important information, which they afterwards showed a strong desire to disavow. But they made no mystery of their real objects. Emmett, above all, boldly avowed the aim which he had set before him—to dissolve the connexion with Great Britain, to accept France as only an ally, and to establish Ireland as an independent Republic.

On reviewing these transactions as authentic documents disclose them, the reader may for himself determine whether the Irish Government of that day can be justly accused, as it often has been, of rigour and revenge in the punishments which it did inflict. He may determine whether, on the contrary, it is not entitled to high praise for risking in the cause of humanity the resentment and alienation of its friends. He may determine whether it was indeed a light and easy task to stem in such a matter the furious temper of those times. "Even at my table,"—so writes Lord Cornwallis, on the 24th of July—"even at my table, where you will suppose I do all I can to prevent it, the conversation always turns on hanging, shooting, burning, and so forth; and if a priest has been put to death, the greatest joy is expressed by the whole company. So much for Ireland and my wretched situation!"

The witnesses at this time before the Secret Committee of the House of Lords—which was far the most important, since there they were examined upon oath—did not altogether spare the character of Mr. Grattan. The direct charge was indeed of small account. There was only some hearsay evidence of no legal value that he had been sworn in an United Irishman by Neilson

and Oliver Bond. This allegation was, I have no doubt at all, untrue. But his own testimony at the Maidstone trials in behalf of Arthur O'Connor, with whose designs it was argued that he must have been well acquainted, and the character of some other of his associates, seemed to many persons to cast a shade upon his loyalty. So far had these suspicions wrought upon the Irish Government, that Lord Cornwallis wrote to recommend his dismissal from the Irish Privy Council. The assent of the Cabinet having been obtained, the name of Henry Grattan was accordingly struck out of the list by the Lord Lieutenant on the 6th of October.

During the progress of the insurrection, and even after its close, the Irish chiefs looked at first with eager hope, and at last with lingering agony, to the promises of support from France. The expedition of Egypt had drawn to another quarter the troops and the chief that they expected for themselves. Still there were other armaments preparing for their aid, but these were so small and so tardy, that, in fact, they only injured the cause they were designed to serve. One division of three frigates and some transports sailed from La Rochelle. It was commanded by General Humbert, with about eleven hundred men. He had with him a considerable number of spare muskets, and three of the Irish exiles, Matthew Tone, Sullivan, and Teeling. On the 22nd of August they landed at Killala, in the county of Mayo. There General Humbert took up his abode in the Bishop's palace, and began to gather the peasants to his standard.

On receiving this intelligence Lord Cornwallis at once sent General Lake across the Shannon, intending himself to follow in two days. General Lake accordingly took the command of several regiments of the Irish Militia encamped at Castlebar. They very much outnumbered the French of General Humbert, who nevertheless, having pushed forward from the sea-coast, boldly attacked them on the morning of the 27th. The Irish regiments, for the most part, behaved as ill as possible; they fled almost without firing a shot. An officer present, the secretary of General Lake, declared that so shameful a rout he never saw. Two of the Colonels, Lord Ormond and Lord Granard, exerted themselves with great spirit, but in vain. It is probable, however, that many of the Militiamen may have run through disaffection quite as much as through panic, since immediately afterwards several hundreds of them joined the French. This engagement, if so it can be termed—

"Si rixa est, ubi tu pulsas, ego vapulo tantum"—

used to go in Ireland by the name of "the Castlebar Races."

The Prime Minister showed on this occasion his characteristic energy. Thus writes Lord Auckland to his friend John Beresford: "I passed the morning yesterday at Holwood. . . . . Mr. Pitt, within four hours after the arrival of the news (of the rout at Castlebar), had given orders for great reinforcements to be sent to you, and they will embark immediately."[9]

But the triumph of the French was of short duration.

[9] See the Beresford Correspondence, vol. ii. p. 180.

Lord Cornwallis appeared at the head of some regular forces, and superior numbers. General Humbert, after losing two or three hundred men in action, was compelled to surrender with the rest at Ballynamuck. Of the insurgents who had joined him, about four hundred were killed in conflict, about one hundred and eighty suffered by sentence of Court Martial. Of the exiles who had landed with him, Sullivan escaped in the disguise of a Frenchman. Matthew Tone and Teeling were conveyed in irons to Dublin, there tried, and executed.

At the same time a single French brig from Dunkirk, the Anacreon, with Napper Tandy, appeared off the coast of Donegal. In his usual vapouring and vainglorious strain he had boasted that land where he pleased, he would be joined by thirty thousand men. But no signs of any, not even the smallest junction appeared; and on learning the fate of Humbert, Tandy re-embarked with great precipitation, and sailed off to Norway. In November of the following year he was given up by the Senate of Hamburg to the Government of England, and he was sent back as a prisoner to Dublin. "Napper Tandy"—so at that time wrote Lord Cornwallis to the Duke of Portland—"is a fellow of so very contemptible a character, that no person in this country seems to care in the smallest degree about him."[1] He was treated accordingly as a person of no sort of importance. Upon his pleading guilty when brought up again for trial, he was respited, and after a short interval allowed to retire to the Continent.

[1] Cornwallis Correspondence, vol. iii. p. 142. See also p. 338.

When the Anacreon appeared off the coast of Donegal, the principal French squadron for the invasion of Ireland was yet behind. It had been for some time past preparing at Brest. There was the Hoche, a seventy-four gun ship, and there were eight frigates, with about three thousand men on board. The ships were commanded by Admiral Bompart, and the troops by General Hardy. Only four of the Irish exiles accompanied this expedition; but among them the ablest of all, Wolfe Tone, who bore the commission of a French officer, and took the name of Smith. On the 11th of October they entered the bay of Killala. But they were followed by a superior squadron under Commodore Sir John Borlase Warren. On the 12th the Hoche was engaged in furious action side by side with a ship of the same size, the Robust. After a well-matched fight of some hours, and a most brave resistance, the French tricolour went down. Six of the French frigates were either taken then or subsequently: only two of the number made good their escape to France.

Wolfe Tone, who in the sea-fight had shown great intrepidity, was taken prisoner with the French officers, and wearing their uniform was not at first distinguished from the rest. But on shore an intimate friend of former years—such a friend as La Rochefoucauld describes—recognized his features, and revealed his name. He was conveyed to Dublin, where, on the 10th of November, a Court Martial was convened. Before this tribunal he appeared in his French uniform, and pleaded his French commission as his privilege. Finding this, as he expected, overruled, and being con-

demned to death, he anticipated the sentence of the law by a self-inflicted wound, and after lingering several days in agony expired.

The Diaries and Correspondence of Tone were published at Washington by his son in 1826. Being written with entire unreserve, they are of great historical interest and value, and as such I have constantly consulted them. The son by whom they were published received, like his father, a commission in the French service, and has appended to the Diaries an account of the campaign of Leipzig, in which as a mere stripling he served. It is one of the best and most entertaining military memoirs that I have ever read in any language. It gave me an interest, notwithstanding the constant hatred of England which he expresses, in the subsequent fate of the author, and I addressed an inquiry upon the subject to an American friend. Here is the answer, dated in April 1860: "When at Washington attending the Supreme Court last week, I found one gentleman who remembers him, and who determines the date of his death by reference to his tombstone in the Georgetown cemetery, October 11, 1828. He is described as a highly intelligent and eccentric person, whose domestic life was not very tranquil, and made him very much a recluse from society. He held, I believe, a subordinate clerkship in the War Office."

CHAPTER XXVII.

1798 — 1799.

Pitt's design of an Act of Union with Ireland — Conferences of the Irish Chancellor and Speaker with the Ministers in London — Heads of the intended measure — Opening of the British Parliament — The Income-Tax — Voluntary contributions in aid — Opposition to the Union in Ireland — Meeting of the Irish Parliament — Equal division — Debates in the British Parliament — Impressive Speech by Pitt upon the Irish question — Its powerful effect — Resolutions carried in both Houses — Change of opinion in Ireland — Compensations — Renewal of war on the Continent — Congress of Rastadt dissolved — Russian army under Suwarrow sent into Italy — Bill for partial Abolition of the Slave Trade thrown out by the Lords — Letter from Lady Chatham.

FROM the outset of the troubles in Ireland Mr. Pitt had fully considered and finally determined the course he should pursue. He thought that to put down the insurrection by force of arms was only the first part of his duty. He thought that to revert to the old system would be a most shallow policy. A new, and comprehensive, and healing measure must be tried—an Act of Union, which should raise the minds of Irishmen from local to imperial aims,—which should blend the two Legislatures, and if possible, also the two nations into one.

To this design Mr. Pitt obtained the full assent of his colleagues. It was also entirely conformable to the opinions of the King. Before Lord Cornwallis set out for Ireland, it was confidentially imparted to him, and

he was instructed to regard it as the great point of ultimate settlement. One month after his landing, we find him write as follows to Mr. Pitt:—"The two or three people whom I have ventured in the most cautious manner to sound, say that it must not be mentioned now—that this is a time of too much danger to agitate such a question. . . . . Convinced as I am that it is the only measure which can long preserve this country, I will never lose sight of it."

When, however, the Irish insurgents had been defeated and the French troops made prisoners, the communications of Lord Cornwallis on this subject became more open and direct. On the 25th of September he reports to Mr. Pitt: "The principal people here are so frightened, that they would, I believe, readily consent to an Union; but then it must be a Protestant Union; and even the Chancellor, who is the most right-headed politician in the country, will not hear of the Roman Catholics sitting in the United Parliament."

Lord Cornwallis, on the contrary, would have preferred their immediate admission as a part of the Act of Union. Till they were admitted, he said, there would be no peace or safety in Ireland. But it is plain—as the subsequent letters of Lord Cornwallis most clearly show—that at this time he greatly underrated the immense obstacles in the way of an Union, even on high Protestant terms. "Our great measure I should think would be carried here without much difficulty." Such are his words to General Ross on the 8th of November. A few months later, and we find the same man almost despairing of success!

Both the Chancellor and the Speaker, John Foster, a man of great weight and ability, went to England about this time, and conferred with several of the Ministers in London. The result as to Mr. Foster is related as follows.

Mr. Pitt to Lord Cornwallis.

"Downing Street, Nov. 17, 1798.

"MY DEAR LORD,

"I have had a great deal of conversation with the Speaker, who arrived here on Wednesday. I found him in his manner perfectly cordial and communicative, and though in his own general opinion strongly against the measure of an Union (particularly at the present moment), yet perfectly ready to discuss the point fairly. . . . On the whole, I think I may venture to say that he will not obstruct the measure; and I rather hope, if it can be made palatable to him personally, which I believe it may, that he will give it fair support.

". . . . In the interval previous to your Session there will, I trust, be full opportunity for communication and arrangement with individuals on whom I am inclined to believe the success of the measure will wholly depend. You will observe that in what relates to the oaths to be taken by Members of the United Parliament, the plan which we have sent copies the precedent I mentioned in a former letter of the Scotch Union; and on the grounds I before mentioned, I own I think this leaves the Catholic question on the only footing on which it can safely be placed. Mr. Elliot, when he brought me your letter, stated very strongly all the arguments which he thought might induce us to admit the Catholics to Parliament and office, but I

confess he did not satisfy me of the practicability of such a measure at this time, or of the propriety of attempting it. With respect to a provision for the Catholic clergy, and some arrangement respecting tithes, I am happy to find an uniform opinion in favour of the proposal among all the Irish I have seen; and I am more and more convinced that those measures, with some effectual mode to enforce the residence of *all* ranks of the Protestant clergy, offer the best chance of gradually putting an end to the evils most felt in Ireland.

"Believe me, my dear Lord, &c.,

"W. PITT.

"P.S.—You may be assured that I shall omit no opportunity of obviating any false impression of the transaction with the State prisoners; but I believe the benefits derived from their discovery are now generally felt and admitted in both countries."

The hopes entertained of the Speaker were by no means fulfilled. His letters from England to his friends at home were, as Lord Castlereagh learnt, very adverse; and on his return he became of all born Irishmen the most powerful opponent, as Lords Clare and Castlereagh were the most powerful promoters, of the Union.

On the 12th of November the heads of the intended measure were transmitted by the Duke of Portland to Lord Cornwallis. They differed in several main points from the Act which subsequently passed. There was no limitation on the prerogative of creating Irish Peers. There was no entire disfranchisement of any Irish county or borough, but either a reduction or an alterna-

tion of the members elected to the Imperial Parliament, so that the entire number should on no account exceed one hundred. There was power reserved to alter the oaths taken by members of both Houses; a power manifestly designed for the future admission of the Roman Catholics. Such was the measure which, when further digested and matured by communications between Dublin and London, was to be brought before the Irish Parliament immediately on its meeting at the close of January next.

Meanwhile the British Parliament had already met. It was opened by the King in person on the 20th of November. There were debates, but no amendment moved in either House.

So early as the 3rd of December Pitt brought forward his financial plan in one of the greatest of his great financial speeches. He stated, in the first place, the necessary expenditure for the year at 29,272,000*l.* Land and Malt, the Lottery, the Consolidated Fund, and the tax laid in the last Session upon exports and imports, would produce altogether little more than six millions, so that there remained upwards of twenty-three millions. In the debates of the preceding Session on the Assessed Taxes he had laid down, and the House seemed to have adopted, two fundamental principles. First, to reduce the total amount to be at present raised by a loan; and next, as far as it was not reducible, to bring it within such a limit that no more loan should be raised than a temporary tax would defray within a limited time. On these principles the increased assessment of last

year had been made; but it had proved less productive than was then expected. "It now appears," said Pitt, "that not by any error in the calculation of our resources, not by any exaggeration of our wealth, but by the general facility of modification, by the anxiety to render the measure as little oppressive as possible, a defalcation has arisen which ought not to have taken place. Yet under the disadvantage and imperfections of an unequal and inadequate scale of application, the effects of the measure have tended to confirm our estimate of its benefits. Every circumstance in our situation, every event in our retrospect, demonstrates the advantage of the system of raising a considerable part of the supplies within the year, and ought to induce us to enforce it with a more effectual provision against frauds. . . . . In these sentiments our leading principle should be to guard against all evasion, and to endeavour, by a fair and strict application, to realize that full tenth which it was the original purpose of the measure of the Assessed Taxes to obtain. . . . . For this purpose it is my intention to propose that the presumption founded upon the Assessed Taxes shall be laid aside, and that a general tax shall be imposed upon all the leading branches of income. No scale of income, indeed, which can be devised will be perfectly free from the objection of inequality, or entirely cut off the power of evasion. All that can be attempted is to approach as near as circumstances will permit to a fair and equal contribution."

Mr. Pitt then proceeded to unfold the very elaborate

plan which he had formed. The power of fixing the rate of assessment in each case was to be given to Commissioners appointed for the purpose. They were to be men of independent position, removed as far as possible from any suspicion of partiality; and with that view a qualification of 300*l*. was proposed. In fixing the assessment upon any person, they were to have not only a legal power, but a large discretion allowed them. From calculations which Pitt gave in full detail, he estimated the annual rents of lands and houses, tithes and mines, the profits of trades or professions, the payments of the Funds, and all other sources of income, at the total amount of one hundred and two millions, so that a tax of ten per cent., if fully carried out, would produce ten millions. Pitt now proposed that, in lieu of the former Assessed Taxes to be at once repealed, there should be a new assessment on all the various kinds of income. The scale was to begin at 65*l*. a year, at which point one hundred and twentieth part was to be taken. It was to proceed by minute advances up to 200*l*. a year, on which and all exceeding incomes ten per cent. was imposed. English subjects residing out of England were not to be exempted, nor yet any bodies politic or corporate. Nor yet was there any distinction between fixed and fluctuating incomes—as between the rents of land, for instance, and the profits of professions.

The scheme of a general tax on all kinds of income was by no means a new one. It had several times been suggested to the Minister by speculative financiers and writers of pamphlets. Thus Bishop Watson of

Llandaff had, earlier in the year, published an able essay entitled 'Hints towards an improved System of Taxation, extending to all persons in exact proportion to their property.' The Bishop states that, so early as December, 1797, he sent in the substance of these hints to Mr. Pitt, who, however, took no notice of it, probably, adds the Bishop, "throwing it aside among the numerous schemes with which he must frequently be pestered." But although the idea was far from new, the whole merit of the execution—of the skilful and prudent framework by which a design so bold and comprehensive was for the first time carried out—belongs undoubtedly to Mr. Pitt.

In opposing the idea of an income-tax, Mr. Tierney appears to have contended that it pressed unduly on the land and was too favourable to the moneyed interest. Here is his argument: "The Chancellor of the Exchequer says that this plan will cause the Funds to rise; so that, if any gentleman has 20,000*l.* in the Funds, his fortune may improve by this duty. If you raise the Funds, for example, two per cent., he will make a large sum of money by his capital; whereas your plan, to be worth anything, should compel the moneyed men to take at least their share of the public burthens."

Another opponent of the measure, Mr. William Smith, took up the very contrary ground. He thought that the land was unduly favoured. He considered the country gentlemen drones, as distinguished from the manufacturing bees, and he called for some distinction in the payment between the useful and the useless

class. These remarks, however, drew upon him a severe retort from Mr. Pitt. "In the class of useless the Hon. gentleman has thought proper to rank all the proprietors of land, those men who form the line which binds and knits society together; those men on whom in a great measure the administration of justice and the internal police of the country depend; those men from whom the poor receive employment, from whom agriculture derives its improvement and support, and to whom, of course, commerce itself is indebted for the foundation on which it rests. Yet this class the Hon. gentleman has thought fit to stigmatise as useless drones, of no estimation in the eyes of society. A light and flippant theory, the offspring of mere temporary, unthinking policy!"

Notwithstanding the arguments of Mr. Tierney and Mr. William Smith, which might be taken as answering each other, the Minister prevailed by a very large majority. The progress of the Bill was affirmed by 183 votes against 17, and it was read a third time on the last day of the year.

The Diary and Letters of Mr. Wilberforce give some account of the Minister at this time. "Nov. 27. Walked in the morning with Pitt and Grenville; much talk about income-tax." "Dec. 6. Pitt's plan of income-tax seems well received upon the whole." "Dec. 14. Supped with Pitt *tête-à-tête*. Much talk about Europe, Ireland, income-tax, Lord Cornwallis, Union. He is, of course, in high spirits, and, what is better, his health, which had seemed to be again declining a few weeks ago, is now, I am assured, more

radically improved than one could almost have hoped." "Dec. 17. With Cookson and Gott (from Leeds) at Pitt's all morning. We hit off a plan for commercial commission. Walker says the manufacturers can't and won't pay."—But they could pay, and they did.

Before Christmas Mr. Pitt deemed it his duty, in view of the recent rebellion and still existing conspiracies, to bring in a Bill continuing from the last Session the suspension of the Habeas Corpus. It led to some debate, and also to several complaints of the treatment of the prisoners arrested under the suspension, amongst others of Colonel Despard; yet, in the sole division that was taken against the measure, the minority, exclusive of the tellers, mustered only six.

In the first days of January, 1799, the Income-Tax Bill came before the House of Peers. It was assailed by Lords Suffolk and Holland and by the Duke of Bedford, and defended by Lords Liverpool, Auckland, and Loughborough; but it passed without any division.

On the measure becoming law, it was thought most desirable to assist and enhance its effect by further voluntary contributions. Men in high places set the example. Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas subscribed each 2000*l.* a year in lieu of their legal assessments; to endure, if they remained in office, so long as the war continued. So did also to the same amount the Speaker, and each of the two Chief Justices, and so did also, though he held no office, Lord Romney. The

King subscribed no less than one-third of his Privy Purse, or 20,000*l.* a year.[1]

At the beginning of 1799 the news that came from Ireland was not inspiriting. Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh had done their utmost to promote the intended Union. By putting forward in its behalf the whole weight and authority of the Government, they gained it a great many—some very unwilling—supporters. Thus, on the 7th of January, we find the Earl of Ely, in a private letter, denounce "this mad scheme," for which, he says, he has not heard a single argument adduced. Yet, in the following year, we find the scheme supported not only by his Lordship, but by his Lordship's six members in the House of Commons. The result to his Lordship was that, on the passing of the Bill, the noble Earl received a Marquisate and also an English peerage.

Mr. Beresford, though with some reluctance, agreed to support the measure; but, sooner than take that course, his second son, Mr. John Claudius Beresford, threw up his sinecure office as Inspector General of Exports. In other cases where gentlemen in office were found obdurate, the Government informed them that there was no further occasion for their services. Thus, in the course of January, both the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir John Parnell, and the Prime Serjeant, Mr. James Fitzgerald, were dismissed. In place of the former, Mr. Isaac Corry, the son of a

[1] See two notes of Mr. Pitt upon this subject in Rose's Correspondence, vol. i. p. 210.

considerable merchant at Newry and himself the Member for that town, was appointed Chancellor of the Exchequer.

On the other hand the Speaker, who now assumed in a very decided manner the character of partisan, Mr. George Ponsonby, Sir John Parnell, and several others, were no less active in the opposite direction. In some cases they sought to alarm selfish interests; in others they appealed to patriotic feeling. Thus prepared on both sides of the question, the two Houses met on the 22nd of January, and the speech of the Lord Lieutenant announced in general terms the project to be laid before them. In the Commons there ensued a debate of perhaps unprecedented length, extending from four in the afternoon of that day till one in the afternoon of the next. Finally, an amendment pledging the House to maintain an "independent Legislature as established in 1782" was rejected by only one vote, the numbers being 106 and 105.

With such a neck and neck division, it was plain that the measure could be for the time no further pressed. But at the very time when this heavy blow was dealt on it in Dublin, it received the aid of a most powerful lever in London. On the same day that the Irish Parliament was opened, the King sent a Message to both Houses in England recommending, in the same words which the Lord Lieutenant had used, the consideration of the best means of consolidating the strength, the power, and the resources of the British empire. Next day Dundas laid upon

the table; sealed up, papers relative to the proceedings of persons and societies engaged in a treasonable conspiracy to effect the separation of the two kingdoms. Little discussion was expected, since only an Address of Thanks was moved. But on the sudden Sheridan moved an amendment levelled at the project of Union. Pitt, though he had not been prepared to open the whole case on this occasion, met the arguments of Sheridan by a most able and convincing reply. We find it on the morrow transmitted as in triumph from the Home Office to the Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. Thus writes the Under-Secretary: "I now send your Lordship, by the Duke of Portland's direction, a dozen impressions of the 'Morning Post,' which is the paper that appears to me, upon the whole, to contain the best report of Mr. Pitt's speech last night. It is, however, after all, but a miserable sketch of the most impressive and one of the most judicious speeches I ever heard. It has, I think, completely decided the question on this side of the water, where people's minds were much afloat."

Two days later the news came of the ill success in the Irish House of Commons, and Pitt himself wrote to the Lord Lieutenant, but without the smallest reference to his own exertions.

"Downing Street, Jan. 26, 1799.

"MY DEAR LORD,

"You will receive from the Duke of Portland an official despatch, in answer to the accounts which came this morning of the proceedings of the first day of your Session. I am certainly much disappointed and grieved

to find that a measure so essential is frustrated for the time by the effect of prejudice and cabal. But I have no doubt that a steady and temperate perseverance on our part will, at no distant period, produce a more just sense of what the real interest of every man who has a stake in Ireland requires—at least as much as duty to the country and the empire at large.

"You will, I hope, approve our own determination to proceed here on Thursday in opening the Resolutions stating the general outline and principles of the plan. It may, I think, be done in such a manner as to show how much Ireland is dependent on us for every benefit she now enjoys, and to lay the strongest ground for resuming the subject in the Irish Parliament with better prospects, either in the course of the present Session (when the real merits of the question shall have been more fully stated to the public) or in the next; and, at all events, the measure is one which we cannot lose sight of, but must make the grand and primary object of all our policy with respect to Ireland. In this view it seems very desirable, if Government is strong enough to do it without too much immediate hazard, to mark by dismissal the sense entertained of the conduct of those persons in office who opposed. In particular it strikes me as essential not to make an exception to this line in the instance of the Speaker's son. No Government can stand on a safe and respectable ground which does not show that it feels itself independent of him. With respect to persons of less note, or those who have been only neutral, more lenity may perhaps be advisable. On the precise extent of the line, however, your Lordship can alone judge on the spot; but I thought you would like to know from me directly the best view I can form of the subject.

"We shall be impatient to hear what further may

have passed in Ireland on Thursday; but whatever may have been the result, it will make no difference in our intention of proceeding here in the manner I have mentioned. . . . . "Believe me, &c.,

"W. PITT."

According to the intention expressed in this letter, Pitt, on the Thursday following — that is on the 31st of January—brought forward in the House of Commons some Resolutions affirming the principles of an Union with Ireland. On this occasion, in a speech of very considerable length, he achieved one of the highest of his many oratorical triumphs. Lord Auckland, writing to Mr. Beresford the day but one after, describes it as follows: "Mr. Pitt's speech on the Irish business surpassed even the most sanguine expectations of friends, and perhaps even any former exhibition of Parliamentary eloquence. It will be published next week, and shall be forwarded to you for the fullest and most extensive circulation through Ireland."

A few years later Mr. Pitt stated in conversation to my father that there were only three speeches (these three being published as pamphlets) that he had ever revised for the press. First, the speech "on finance before the commencement of the war:" this was, as I conceive, the speech of February 17, 1792, proposing both a repeal of certain taxes and an increase of the Sinking Fund;[2] secondly, the speech on the Union

[2] Lord Grenville, in conversation, mentioned as corrected by Pitt the speech "on the Sinking Fund." This has led the editor of Mr. Rogers's notes to conclude, but I think erroneously, that the speech in question was on the first proposal of that Fund, March 29, 1786. See Rogers's "Recollections" (p. 188, ed. 1859).

(January 31, 1799); and, thirdly, the speech on the overtures from France (January 22, 1800). From the authenticity of this speech on the Union, and from the important views of policy which it discloses, I shall, contrary to my usual practice, proceed to give some considerable extracts:—

"Suppose, for instance, that the present war, which the Parliament of Great Britain considers to be just and necessary, had been voted by the Irish Parliament to be unjust, unnecessary, extravagant, and hostile to the principle of humanity and freedom. Would that Parliament have been bound by this country? If not, what security have we, at a moment the most important to our common interest and common salvation, that the two kingdoms should have but one friend and one foe? . . . . . This country is at this time engaged in the most important and momentous conflict that ever occurred in the history of the world—a conflict in which Great Britain is distinguished for having made the only manly and successful stand against the common enemy of civilized society. We see the point in which that enemy thinks us the most assailable. Are we not then bound in policy and prudence to strengthen that vulnerable point, involved as we are in a contest of liberty against despotism—of property against plunder and rapine—of religion and order against impiety and anarchy? There was a time when this would have been termed declamation; but, unfortunately, long and bitter experience has taught us to feel that it is only the feeble and imperfect representation of those calamities, the result of French principles and French arms,

which are every day attested by the wounds of a bleeding world."

"I am well aware that the subject of religious distinction is a dangerous and delicate topic, especially when applied to Ireland. The situation of Ireland is different in this respect from the situation of every other country. Where the established religion of a state is the same as the general religion of the empire, and where the property of the country is in the hands of a comparatively small number of persons professing that established religion, while the religion of the great majority of the people is different, it is not easy to say on general principles what system of Church Establishment in such a country would be free from difficulty and inconvenience. . . . . No man can say that in the present state of things, and while Ireland remains a separate kingdom, full concessions could be made to the Catholics without endangering the state and shaking the constitution of Ireland to its centre."

"On the other hand, without anticipating the discussion, or the propriety of discussing the question, or saying how soon or how late it may be fit to discuss it, two propositions are indisputable: first, when the conduct of the Catholics shall be such as to make it safe for the Government to admit them to the participation of the privileges granted to those of the established religion, and when the temper of the times shall be favourable to such a measure—when these events take place, it is obvious that such a question may be agitated in an united, imperial Parliament, with much greater safety than it could be in a separate legislature. In

the second place, I think it certain that, even for whatever period it may be thought necessary, after the Union, to withhold from the Catholics the enjoyment of those advantages, many of the objections which at present arise out of their situation would be removed if the Protestant legislature were no longer separate and local, but general and imperial; and the Catholics themselves would at once feel a mitigation of the most goading and irritating of their present causes of complaint.

"How far, in addition to this great and leading consideration, it may also be wise and practicable to accompany the measure by some mode of relieving the lower orders from the pressure of tithes, which, in many instances, operate at present as a great practical evil, or to make, under proper regulations, and without breaking in on the security of the present Protestant establishment, an effectual and adequate provision for the Catholic clergy, it is not now necessary to discuss. It is sufficient to say that these and all other subordinate points connected with the same subject are more likely to be permanently and satisfactorily settled by an united legislature than by any local arrangements.

"But, Sir, if, on the other hand, it should happen that there be a country which against the greatest of all dangers that threaten its peace and security has not adequate means of protecting itself without the aid of another nation; if that other be a neighbouring and kindred nation, speaking the same language, whose laws, whose customs, and habits are the same in principle, but carried to a greater degree of perfection,

with a more extensive commerce and more abundant means of acquiring and diffusing national wealth—the stability of whose Government, the excellence of whose constitution is more than ever the admiration and envy of Europe, and of which the very country of which we are speaking can only boast an inadequate and imperfect resemblance—under such circumstances, I would ask, what conduct would be prescribed by every rational principle of dignity, of honour, or of interest? I would ask whether this is not a faithful description of the circumstances which ought to dispose Ireland to an union?—whether Great Britain is not precisely the nation with which, on these principles, a country situated as Ireland is would desire to unite? Does an union under such circumstances, by free consent, and on just and equal terms, deserve to be branded as a proposal for subjecting Ireland to a foreign yoke? Is it not rather the free and voluntary association of two great countries, which join, for their common benefit, in one empire, where each will retain its proportional weight and importance, under the security of equal laws, reciprocal affection, and inseparable interests, and which want nothing but that indissoluble connexion to render both invincible?

> "Non ego nec Teucris Italos parere jubebo,
> Nec nova regna peto; paribus se legibus ambæ
> Invictæ gentes æterna in fœdera mittant."[3]

The eloquence of Pitt on this occasion produced

[3] Æn., lib. xii. ver. 189. In the second line Pitt put *nova* instead of *mihi*, which would have been inapplicable.

a most powerful effect. We find, for example, just before it, Wilberforce in great doubt as to his vote; almost immediately afterwards his mind was made up to support the measure. The fame of that great speech reached Lady Chatham in her retirement, and she could not refrain from congratulations to her son. Here is his reply:—

"Downing Street, Saturday,
"My dear Mother, Feb. 9, 1799.

"I have to give you a thousand thanks for your kind letter. I am very far from having suffered by the labours which gave occasion to it. The report which has reached you is, I fear, much too partial; but I shall have great reason to be satisfied if I have at all done justice to the question I had to bring forward. We are not likely to encounter any serious difficulty here, and the discussion in the House of Commons will probably be finished in the course of the next week. In Ireland the progress of conviction cannot be expected to be very rapid; but I see enough to entertain a strong persuasion that it will probably work its way sooner than is now expected.

. . . . . .

"Ever, my dear Mother, &c.,
"W. Pitt."

The project of Union as mooted on the 23rd of January, and the Resolutions as moved on the 31st, gave rise to several keen debates. Fox continued absent, and did not declare his opinion. But the project was opposed with great eloquence by Sheridan and Grey, and not less ably supported by Dundas and Canning. The Speaker delivered a weighty and im-

pressive speech in its favour, while another personal friend of the Prime Minister, Henry Bankes, declared against it. Yet, though the palm of eloquence might perhaps be disputed, there could be no doubt as to the predominance of numbers. An amendment moved by Sheridan was rejected by a majority of almost ten to one—140 to 15; and on a subsequent day the numbers were 149 and 24.

The Resolutions, when carried in the Commons, were transmitted to the other House for its concurrence. They were agreed to without a division, though after a long debate. Lord Grenville and Lord Auckland, now joint Postmaster-General, greatly distinguished themselves in support of the measure, while Lord Lansdowne and Lord Moira spoke with effect upon the other side.

The King also was much in favour of the scheme. "I only hope," he said to Dundas about this time, "Government is not pledged to anything in favour of the Roman Catholics." "No," the Minister answered; "it will be a matter for future consideration;" and on the King going on to allege his scruples upon the Coronation Oath, he endeavoured to explain that this Oath applied to His Majesty only in his executive capacity, and not as part of the Legislature. But George the Third angrily rejoined, "None of your Scotch metaphysics, Mr. Dundas! None of your Scotch metaphysics!"[4]

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[4] Life of Sir James Mackintosh, by his Son, vol. i. p. 170, ed. 1835. This conversation was related to Mackintosh by Dundas himself.

It had been hoped by the English Ministers that the scheme of Union might still be resumed in the Irish Parliament before the close of the Session. But Lord Cornwallis represented the attempt as impracticable, and the question was postponed till the commencement of the ensuing year. Meanwhile the Irish people became better informed as to the project, and the strong arguments in its support began in various quarters to prevail. "From everything that I can learn,"—so writes Lord Cornwallis on the 28th of March—"the opinion of the loyal part of the public is changing fast in favour of the Union." And again on the 13th of August he reports of the south: "In general, good disposition towards the Government, and cordial approbation of the measure of Union. This sentiment," he adds, "is confined to no particular class of men, but equally pervades both the Catholic and Protestant bodies."

Great advantage also was derived from the recent debates in the Irish Parliament. Lord Castlereagh pointed out various changes in the project to meet the objections that had been or that might be urged. If only one member was left to each county, the primary interests would still prevail, but the secondary interests would be swept away. Lord Castlereagh recommended that each county should be allowed two members as before, and that on the other hand there should be a considerable disfranchisement of nomination boroughs, the proprietors to receive a liberal price in money. There should be liberal compensation also to the holders of office in Dublin, and to all other persons

whose interests might be unfavourably affected by the measure. Lord Castlereagh calculated that a million and a half in money would be required to effect all these compensations, but that without them the Union would not be carried. Most of his suggestions were in consequence adopted.

It will be observed that the system of compensation here proposed was not of a party character, or such as applied to friends alone. Thus, a proprietor of borough influence, on the passing of the Union, would receive exactly the same sum, whether he had voted for the measure or against it. But the remark cannot be extended to other compensations or rewards tendered on condition of support to the members of both Houses. There were many promises of a Marquisate, or some other step in the Irish Peerage. There were many promises of a Barony in the English Peerage. There were many promises of an office, a pension, or a favour of some other kind. And before the actual promise there was a great deal of bargaining and chaffering as to terms. Nothing but the national necessity of carrying the measure could have reconciled the English statesmen to such a course. Lord Cornwallis most especially speaks of it with deep disgust. To a confidential friend he wrote as follows on the 20th of May: "The political jobbing of this country gets the better of me. It has been the wish of my life to avoid all this dirty business; and I am now involved in it beyond all bearing. . . How I long to kick those whom my public duty obliges me to court!"

It has been alleged that at this time there were also

large payments of money, or, in plain words, the purchase of votes. To any large extent the allegation does not seem true. There were certainly some payments of money on both sides. There was a stock-purse of the Opposition chiefs, furnished by subscription. There was a demand from time to time of secret supplies from the Treasury in England. But these secret supplies, as confidential notes have since disclosed them, were on no considerable scale. Thus we find in January, 1800, after much and earnest pressing, the despatch of only 5000*l.* from London, with some hopes of "a still further sum, though not immediately."[5] And as to the application of these sums on the Government side, it must be remembered that the Union was not the only subject, nor Members of Parliament the only persons, with which they had to deal. They had conspiracies to trace as well as opposition to encounter; and in a lower class they had runners and informers in their pay.

Meanwhile the sealed papers which Mr. Dundas presented to the English House of Commons on the 23rd of January had been referred to a Select Committee. On the 15th of March the Committee gave in their Report. They stated that they had found the clearest proofs of a systematic design, formed by conspirators at home in conjunction with France, and pursued during several years, to overturn the laws and constitution both in Great Britain and Ireland. They explained in detail the means which had been used for that object; the system of the Society of the "United Irishmen," and

[5] Cornwallis Correspondence, vol. iii. p. 156.

other societies in Great Britain; the attempts to form National Conventions in England and Scotland, and the proceedings subsequent to the arrests of 1794. They expressed their firm belief that treasonable plans were now more than ever in progress, and that agents from Ireland were concerting with the French a fresh and general insurrection.

On the 19th of April Mr. Pitt rose to call the attention of the House to this Report. It was so full, he said, of convincing proofs as to render any comments useless. He proposed that whoever should continue, after a day to be named, to be a member of the "Corresponding Society," the "United Irishmen," or "United Englishmen," should be liable to a punishment varying, according to the circumstances of the case, from a fine to imprisonment or transportation. The same penalties should attach to the members of any other societies which, like those he had mentioned, were bound together by secret oaths. The necessity for a licence and the restrictions already applied to lecture-rooms should be extended to debating societies. The proprietors of printing-presses were to obtain certificates from the Clerks of the Peace; and the name and abode of the printer were to appear on every copy of every book or paper printed, under a penalty for each omission of 20*l*. Mr. Tierney stated his entire dissent: nevertheless the Bill, prepared according to the views and on the motion of Mr. Pitt, passed both Houses with but little opposition.

Next month we obtain a glimpse of Pitt in private life from a visit of Wilberforce, which his Diary

describes: "May 18, 1799. To Holwood by half-past four. Pitt riding out. Lord Camden and J. Villiers came, with whom walked. Pitt, Canning, and Pepper Arden came in late to dinner. . . . . Evening: Canning and Pitt reading classics."

In the spring of this year there was a renewal of the war upon the Continent. The Congress of Rastadt, after long and wearisome sittings, had failed to effect its objects. It was formally dissolved in April, not without considerable animosity in its last discussions. But that animosity was much farther inflamed by a mysterious crime, which has never yet been clearly explained, the murder of the French plenipotentiaries on their journey homeward. They had set out on a dark night for Strasburg, when just beyond the gates of Rastadt their carriages were attacked by a body of horsemen in the dress of Austrian hussars. Two of the plenipotentiaries were dragged out and slain in cold blood; the third, Jean Debry, though struck down by two of the men with their sabres, and left for dead upon the road, was able to creep into the neighbouring wood, and to escape with little harm.

Even before this atrocious act, which the press at Paris of the time did not fail to ascribe to the villainy of Mr. Pitt, the French and Austrians had taken the field. To recover Italy was now the great object of the latter. They had upon the Adige a well-appointed and numerous army, commanded by the Baron de Melas, an excellent soldier, but greatly past his prime. Their principal reliance, however, was upon their allies. They obtained the aid of the Emperor Paul of Russia, whose

fickle and eccentric mind was at this time vehemently turned against France. He engaged to support the Court of Vienna in its designs upon Italy with an army of fifty thousand men, which accordingly he sent to the Adige under the command of the most renowned of his generals, the queller of the Turks, and surnamed Rimniksky from the battle of Rimnik,[6] the half-savage but hitherto unconquered Marshal Suwarrow.

In pursuance of the same object the English Cabinet had concluded a treaty of subsidy with Russia. It was agreed that the Emperor should employ an army of forty-five thousand men, and that England should assign to him the sum of 225,000*l.* as preparation money, and 75,000*l.* monthly, besides a further payment at the conclusion of a peace made by common assent. Thus we were no longer without allies,—but we had to pay for them!

This treaty was communicated to Parliament by a Royal Message in the month of June. Pitt, in moving for a grant of 825,000*l.* to make good His Majesty's engagements, expressed his hope that, notwithstanding, the English people would mainly rely on their own exertions. "Even if," he said, "the common cause were to be again abandoned by your allies, you will never forget that in the moment of difficulty and danger you found safety where only it is to be found—in your own resolution, firmness, and conduct." Tierney, though without dividing the House, opposed the grant, and Pitt replied. "The Hon. gentleman persists in

[6] Castera, Vie de Catherine II., vol. iii. p. 76.

saying that we have an intention to wage war against opinion. It is not so. We are not in arms against the opinions of the closet nor the speculations of the school. We are at war with armed opinions. . . . . Their appearance in arms changed their character; and we will not leave the monster to prowl the world unopposed."

In this year, as in the preceding ones, Wilberforce brought in a motion to abolish the Slave Trade at a limited time. It was again supported by Pitt, and also with great eloquence by Canning, but on the other hand opposed by Dundas and Windham, and again rejected by 84 votes against 54.

Yet the question was not laid aside. A Bill was introduced by Mr. Henry Thornton for a much smaller object—to confine the trade within certain limits upon the coast of Africa. This Bill passed the Commons, and was sent to the House of Lords. There, however, it was exposed to great hazards, some of a very peculiar and mortifying kind. They will be found explained in the following letter, which Lord Chatham received from Mr. Pitt.

"Downing Street, May 29, 1799.

"MY DEAR BROTHER,

"There is a Bill depending in the House of Lords, which will probably not be decided before your return, for restraining the Slave Trade on that part of the African coast where the Sierra Leone Company has its establishment. It is a measure which really seems to be liable to no one of the objections which have weighed against the general abolition of the trade, and,

without even any alleged inconvenience to the West India Islands, might be productive of very beneficial consequences to that part of Africa. An opposition, however, has been raised to it, ostensibly by the Duke of Clarence, but in fact, I am sorry to say, by some of the members of the administration, who are supported by a great appearance of Court influence. This leads to very unpleasant consequences, not merely with a view to the measure itself, but from the general effect of an attempt openly to employ the weight and influence of Government against the sentiments of those in whose favour it ought to operate; and I have therefore found myself under the necessity of calling in all the strength I can in support of the measure.

"On the general question of the Slave Trade I am afraid your sentiments may not exactly coincide with my own; but I am persuaded, when you come to consider the measure, you will see there is no pretence for this opposition except a blind determination to encourage, for its own sake and without the shadow of advantage, a trade which no one pretends to justify; and I am sure you will feel the force of the other considerations I have mentioned to you. My chief motive, however, in troubling you just now is only to beg earnestly that you will have the goodness to keep your decision open upon the subject till we have an opportunity of talking it over fully, which will probably be in a few days. I have little doubt that upon the whole the Bill will be carried, but not without a great contest.

"We are still without the news so impatiently looked for from the fleet.

"Ever, my dear Brother, affectionately yours,

"W. PITT."

On the 5th July came the debate upon the Second

Reading. Wilberforce, in his Diary, gives of it a pithy account. "The Bishops' proxies all in favour of the Bill. Thurlow profane balderdash. Westmorland coarse. Bishop of Rochester (Dr. Horsley), ill-judged application of Scripture. Grenville spoke well." Lord Grenville, it should be noted, was warmly in favour of the Bill, which, on the other hand, was opposed by the Duke of Clarence, Lord Thurlow, and Lord Liverpool. A division being called for, the proxies were found to be exactly equal, 36 on each side, while of the Peers in the House there were only 27 Contents to 32 Not Contents. So, to Pitt's great mortification, the Bill was lost.

The vote on the 5th of July was one of the last of this Session; it was closed by the King in person on the 12th.

It gives me pleasure at this place to be able to lay before the reader one letter at least from Lady Chatham to her son. As I have mentioned elsewhere, there are none left among Mr. Pitt's papers. But three, which refer to applications for offices, remained in the hands of his last Private Secretary; and that gentleman has most kindly presented them to me.

Lady Chatham to Mr. Pitt.

"Burton Pynsent, July 27, 1799.

"Very bad weather, my dear son, for me to use my pen to-day; but, however, I must just write three lines to you. The folly of poor Croft's addled, wild head has been sufficiently punished, for, as I have been informed, what small place remained to him has been taken from him, and he is really left destitute. Mr.

Rose promised me that a place should be found for him in a way which would be least talked about, as the offended gentlemen were angry with his impertinence. Notwithstanding the oddity of his character, his unceasing, and, indeed, his extraordinary attachment and zeal for your ever-loved father, entitles him to be forgiven and provided for; for, though often absurd in his manner, his merit is very great. Your brother Chatham, I know, and Lady Chatham also, are equally anxious for him, and his wife, in their hard situation. I need, I am sure, add nothing further on the subject, so shall finish my letter with a thousand congratulations for our various successes.

"God bless you.

"Ever your most affectionate Mother,

"HESTER CHATHAM."

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1799 — 1800.

Invasion of Mysore — Seringapatam taken by assault — Bonaparte advances into Syria — Siege of Acre — Sir Sidney Smith — Retreat of the French — The Turks defeated at Aboukir — Victories of Suwarrow in Italy — His retreat in Switzerland — Landing of the Duke of York in Holland — Surrender of the Dutch fleet — British army re-embarks — Return to France of Bonaparte — Revolution of the Eighteenth of Brumaire — Bonaparte First Consul — His letter to George the Third — Projected secret expedition — Meeting of Parliament — Debate on the expedition to Holland — Treaties with the Emperor and the German Princes — Petition from the City of London — Pitt's financial measures — Deficient harvest — Union with Ireland.

THE year 1799 was marked by a wide extension of hostilities. Beginning with the quarter most remote from England, we find ourselves for the second time arrayed against Tippoo. By his peace with Lord Cornwallis the Sultan of Mysore had been compelled to yield a considerable portion of his territory, and his two sons as hostages; and although they had received every token of kindness, and been restored to him with all honour and respect, his animosity continued unabated. The French conquest of Egypt wrought upon his fancy and flattered him with the view of approaching succour, while the French agents on their part were indefatigable in courting his alliance. Some of them, in their eagerness to give what they deemed the most honourable title, addressed him as "Citizen Sultan!"

At the beginning of 1799 Lord Mornington still

entertained the hope that peace might be maintained. He came from Calcutta to Madras to conduct in person from a nearer point the negotiation with Tippoo. But he soon became convinced that the only object upon the other side was to gain time until French succour, already stipulated by a secret treaty, might arrive. Assured of this fact, and accomplished in administration as in diplomacy, he took his measures with promptitude and skill. Early in March a well-appointed army of more than thirty thousand men invaded the kingdom of Mysore. General Harris held the chief command. By his side, with the rank of Colonel, was a young officer as yet unknown to fame, but destined ere long to fill one of the brightest pages in his country's annals—the Hon. Arthur Wellesley, a younger brother of Lord Mornington.

Advancing from the coast, the British army defeated Tippoo in several encounters, and besieged him in Seringapatam. On the 4th of May, after a hard contested struggle, the city was taken by assault. The Sultan himself showed a courage worthy of a better fate; he fell fighting in one of the gateways, where General Baird, the officer in command, subsequently discovered his body pierced with four wounds and buried beneath a heap of slain. With his death ended the war. The whole kingdom of Mysore was now in the gift of the Governor-General, who resolved to divide it between the Company, the Nizam, and the Peishwah.

It is interesting to trace in the papers now before me how close was the intimacy that had grown up in

England between Lord Mornington and Mr. Pitt. The letters of the Governor General to the Prime Minister are all in the most familiar strain. Here are some chief passages of one written after the reduction of Mysore:—

"Fort St. George, Aug. 8, 1799.

"My dear Pitt,

"I refer you to the despatches and printed papers which I now transmit for the state of affairs in this quarter, and for the detail of the late glorious and happy events. . . . With respect to myself, I continue very well, although occasionally much fatigued with business. However splendid our successes have been, however bright are our prospects, and whatever may be the delight of being toad-eated by all India from Cabul to Assam, I dislike this throne, and wish most ardently for the moment when I may return *functus officio*. With these sentiments I may be allowed to say that I suppose you will either hang me or magnificently honour me for my deeds (mine they are, be they good or bad). In either case I shall be gratified, for an English gallows is better than an Indian throne; but these words must be buried in your own breast, for here I pretend to be very happy and humble.

"I think you will enjoy *Le Citoyen Tipou* and *Citoyen Sultan* in the papers found at Seringapatam.

"I admire your conduct with respect to the Union. I hope you will persevere, but *I trust you* will *not trust* Ireland to my old friend Hobart. He used to be a good humoured fellow, but from what I have heard of his reign here he is utterly unfit to govern anywhere.

"Ever yours most affectionately,

"M.

"I take this opportunity to remind you of your kind intention to make my brother Gerald a fat pluralist: he is at present a meagre singularist; and singularity nearly approaches to the crime of heresy and schism.

"I send you by Henry a pair of pistols found in the palace at Seringapatam. They are mounted in gold, and were given by the late King of France to the Citizen Sultan. They will, I hope, answer better for your next Jacobin duel than those you used under Abershaw's gibbet."

I do not know what has become of the pistols to which Lord Mornington refers; but one of the commanding officers at Seringapatam transmitted to Mr. Pitt another of the spoils—a small powder-flask of solid gold which Tippoo had worn on his last day, suspended on his side by a silken cord. That memorial is now in my possession, having been presented by Mr. Pitt to his niece, Lady Hester Stanhope.

In the course of the same year the services of Lord Mornington were acknowledged by a step in the Peerage. He took the title of Marquis Wellesley; having about the same period changed to this the family name. "Arthur Wesley"—such in his earlier letters was the signature of the Duke of Wellington.

In Egypt General Bonaparte, cut off from all intercourse with Europe by the destruction of his fleet, had planned another conquest for his army. Early in the year he marched into Syria with the flower of his forces. The smaller places on his route were reduced without obstacle; and the Turks were as easily routed in the open field. Djezzar Pacha shut himself up in his for-

tress of Acre and awaited a siege. In this beyond all doubt the French would have prevailed, if the Pacha had relied only on his Asiatic levies. Happily for him, at this juncture he obtained the zealous co-operation of a British chief. This was Sir Sidney Smith.

Sir Sidney, whom we left a captive in the prisons of the Temple at Paris, had some time before, with great enterprise and boldness, effected his escape. In England he obtained the command of the naval force appointed to cruise off the coast of Egypt. Landing with some of his boats' crews, he showed, as they did under his direction, a most unremitting gallantry in the defence of Acre. In vain did General Bonaparte try all the resources of his skill; in vain did the French, with their customary ardour, rush up again and again to the assault, and pour forth their blood with prodigal courage. On the sixty-first day of the siege they found it necessary to desist from their enterprise and commence in all haste their retreat to Egypt. Until that time, and for many years afterwards, this was Napoleon's sole reverse in his campaigns.

The Turks, however, presumed too far on this case of ill-success. Intent on the re-conquest of Egypt, they set on shore, with little precaution, a large but undisciplined army at Aboukir. General Bonaparte from Cairo watched and seized the favourable opportunity. Darting as by a sudden spring on these barbarous hordes, he inflicted on them a signal defeat on the 26th of July, putting to the sword a great number, and scattering the rest far and wide, with the total loss of their artillery, tents, and baggage.

Italy was at this time the theatre of some strange vicissitudes. Towards the close of 1798 the King of Naples, emboldened both by the absence of Bonaparte and by the presence of Nelson, had imprudently declared war against the French. His troops, commanded by the Austrian General Mack, had advanced in triumph to Rome, where they proclaimed the old forms and commenced a system of reaction. But ere long they were routed utterly and irretrievably by the French General Championnet. The King and Royal Family found themselves compelled to embark for Palermo, while Championnet, entering Naples, proclaimed a new commonwealth, under the name of the Parthenopeian Republic.

In the spring of 1799 the alliance of the two Emperors entirely changed the scene. The Austrians and the Russians appeared in force on the Adige. The King of Naples returned from Sicily under the protection of Lord Nelson and the British fleet. The French in the south fell back from Naples to Rome, and from Rome to Florence. In the north, Marshal Suwarrow, at the head of the Allied forces, achieved a series of splendid victories. At the battle of the Trebbia, General Macdonald was defeated. At the battle of Novi, General Joubert was defeated and slain. Milan and Turin opened their gates to the Allies. Mantua surrendered after a period of blockade. By the autumn, no part of Italy, except the state of Genoa, remained in possession of the French.

In Germany the French chiefs also underwent reverses, and were compelled to recross the Rhine. It

was only in Switzerland that the ascendency of the French arms was during this year maintained. There had been sent another body of Russians, under General Korsakow, to the aid of the Archduke Charles. It was defeated by General Massena in a great battle near Zurich; and Marshal Suwarrow was summoned in all haste from Italy to repair the faults of his lieutenant. But he found them irreparable. He found it necessary to retreat, which it was his boast to have never done in a military service of forty years. Even in this retreat, however, he evinced his energy and skill. He led his troops over mountain passes hitherto trodden only by the goat-herd and the chamois-hunter. By such means alone could he rescue his army from its dangerous position, and bring it back within its frontiers at the close of the campaign.

It was the anxious wish of Mr. Pitt to take an effective part in the warlike movements of this year. Holland, or as now termed, the Batavian Republic, was his object. He was flattered with positive assurances that the Dutch were weary of the French dominion, and would rally in large numbers around the Orange banner, if once unfurled. With this hope, and in concert with Mr. Dundas, he planned a joint expedition. It was to consist of about thirty thousand British troops and half as many Russians. It was to effect a landing on some point in the province of North Holland, and march forward to Amsterdam. The Duke of York was to have the honour and the difficulties of the chief command; and as one of the Major-Generals, Lord Chatham was to serve.

An excellent officer, Sir Ralph Abercromby, commanded the first division of the British forces, amounting to twelve thousand men. They had been encamped on Barham Downs, and they embarked from Ramsgate and Deal. Arriving off the Dutch coast, they found the enemy already apprised of their design. Yet, could they have pushed forward at once, they might not improbably have succeeded in their enterprise. But when the troops were ready to go on shore, a violent storm arose, and drove the ships again to sea. In a fortnight, when they re-appeared, the state of affairs was no longer the same. The Dutch General, Daendels, had with great activity and vigour collected all the troops in the province, and formed them in lines of defence from the Helder to Haerlem. Nevertheless, on the 27th of August the British chiefs effected a landing, repulsed the Dutch forces, and reduced the Helder fort. A further and considerable success ensued. The remainder of the Dutch fleet was now in the Texel, and still amounted to thirteen ships of war, besides some smaller frigates. Deprived of support from the land side, and blockaded from the sea by Admiral Mitchell, these ships surrendered by capitulation. In the naval contest which we had then to wage such a capture was of the highest importance, and had been one main object with Pitt and Dundas when they planned this expedition.

Sir Ralph Abercromby now made a movement in advance, and having successfully repulsed some attacks from the Dutch General Daendels and the French General Brune, intrenched his position at the Zype to

await the coming of the Duke of York. His Royal Highness arrived towards the middle of September, bringing with him the main division of the Russians from the Baltic, and three more brigades of British troops. The whole united body numbered three and thirty thousand effective men; a larger force than the enemy could muster; but on the other hand the enemy had the great advantage of neighbouring supplies and of daily reinforcements; while the partisans of the late Stadtholder, though probably most numerous, as in 1813, gave no signs of the enthusiasm which in that year and to the cry of "Oranje Boven" they so triumphantly displayed. Certainly there was no appearance of any popular rising, and the Duke of York perceived that he must rely on his own forces alone.

Hoping by activity and enterprise to retrieve the want of native aid, the Duke, on the 19th of September, advanced with the army in four columns. Here, however, was made manifest the want of military concert between the Allies. One column of Russians, in neglect of their instructions, pushed forward too far and beyond the village of Bergen, until their ammunition became exhausted, and they were driven back with some loss and in great disorder. They communicated that disorder to another column composed partly of their countrymen, so that the complete success of the other two columns proved of no avail.

On the 2nd of October the attack upon the enemy's positions was renewed. Then the Russians reversed their former fault, and could not be brought to advance in sufficient time. The English, however, gained the vic-

tory, but it was heavily purchased by the loss of above two thousand killed and wounded. On the 6th there was another action, attended with fresh losses and marked by no decisive result.

During this time we find Mr. Pitt anxious to spare both the Ladies Chatham all uneasiness, and sending to each the earliest accounts of the safety of her son or of her husband. Here is one of his letters :—

"Downing Street, Sunday, Oct. 12, 1799.

"I am most happy, my dear mother, to be able to begin by telling you that my brother is *safe and well*, after another severe and honourable action, in which he bore a very considerable part. We have to be thankful for a very narrow escape, as he was struck in the shoulder by a spent ball, which his epaulette prevented from entering. We have this information from an officer who writes, having seen and conversed with him the next day, and who kindly sends this account, thinking, as was the case, that my brother from his position would not have been able to send his letter to head-quarters in time for this messenger.

"The action took place on the 6th, in consequence of an attack made by us, which ended highly to the honour of our troops and left us masters of the field of battle; but the advantage was not decisive enough to promise much further progress at such a season in so difficult a country, and our army therefore afterwards retired to its former position. I write in haste and in the first moment, lest by accident any false or exaggerated report should reach you.

"Ever, my dear Mother, &c.,

"W. PITT."

How frail, how very frail the thread on which the government of England at that time depended! Any chance bullet which had closed the life of Lord Chatham must also have closed the administration of Mr. Pitt, so far at least as its main point, the leadership of the House of Commons, was concerned.

On the action of the 6th of October Sir Ralph Abercromby and the other General Officers delivered a representation to the Duke of York, urging the reduced state of the army, less by nearly ten thousand men than at its landing, and opposed to the daily increasing forces of the French. They pointed out the many other difficulties in the way of their enterprise from the unwillingness of the Dutch to rise, and from the approach of the winter season, and they recommended an immediate retreat of the army to its late position at the Zype. In compliance with this counsel a retreat was at once effected, only fifty wounded English and Russians being left behind.

But even at the Zype His Royal Highness was sorely perplexed. He had before him only a choice of evils and of difficulties. To advance was now admitted as impossible; to maintain his position was to sacrifice his troops to marsh-fevers without attaining any useful end. To re-embark them in the face of a vigilant enemy would cost him, as he calculated, at least three thousand men. Under these circumstances he determined to try the issue of negotiation. Several conferences took place at the outposts, and finally a convention was signed. It was agreed that the Allied troops should re-embark without molestation by the end of November. On the

other hand the fortress of the Helder was to be given up entire with all the artillery upon the works, and eight thousand Dutch or French prisoners, to be selected by agents from those nations, were to be freely restored. Thus ingloriously ended an enterprise on which such large sums had been expended, and of which such high hopes had been formed.

At the close of this expedition Mr. Pitt wound up as follows his correspondence with his sister-in-law:—

"Holwood, Sunday, Oct. 21, 1799, 4 P.M.

"MY DEAR LADY CHATHAM,

"We have just received accounts from Holland, by which I find my brother is perfectly well, and all further suspense and anxiety is happily removed, as an agreement has been concluded, by which our army is to evacuate Holland within a limited time, and is ensured from all molestation in doing so. It is certainly no small disappointment to be coming away by compromise, instead of driving the enemy completely before us, as we once had reason to hope; but under all the difficulties which the season and circumstances have produced, it ought to be a great satisfaction to us to know that our valuable army will be restored to us safe and entire. The private relief it will be to your mind as well as to my own is of itself no small additional consolation. Huskisson does not mention in sending me these accounts whether there is any letter to you from my brother. If there is not, I have desired him to send on to you my brother's letter to me; but if there is one to yourself, I have desired him to send my brother's to Dundas, which I wish him to see, because it gives a fuller account than the official letters of the

reasons for the arrangement, and leaves no doubt of its propriety.

"Ever affectionately yours,

"W. PITT."

In the early part of this expedition to Holland the English Parliament was sitting. The King's Speech on the opening of the Session was delivered on the 24th of September. His Majesty stated that he had convoked the Lords and Commons at that unusual season that they might consider the propriety of enabling him without delay to avail himself of the voluntary services of the Militia. Immediately afterwards Mr. Dundas brought in a Bill giving new facilities for this purpose; a Bill which passed the Commons with no opposition, and the Lords with very little. This business having been concluded so early as the 12th of October, Parliament was adjourned over the Christmas holidays for a period of more than three months.

But the opening Speech of the King had been by no means confined to this single topic. It had been marked by a tone of high exultation, expressing the sanguine hopes which the progress of the war inspired. The north of Italy might be looked upon as already rescued from the French. Naples had thrown off their dominion; in Syria their arms had been repulsed, and in India their interests counteracted. And on our part, added His Majesty, there was every reason to expect that the attempt to deliver the United Provinces would be successful. With words such as these last placed in the mouth of the Sovereign and delivered in state from the

Throne, it must have been doubly painful only a fortnight afterwards to confess the utter disappointment of that brilliant aspiration.

Notwithstanding, however, the retreat of the Duke of York from the Dutch plains, as of Marshal Suwarrow from the Swiss mountains, the general results of this campaign were certainly most adverse to the French. During many months General Bonaparte had been without any tidings of Europe. At length—through the courtesy, it is said, of the commander of the English squadron—he received a packet of newspapers up to the month of June. There he learnt for the first time the great disasters which the feeble government of the Directors had sustained. "The wretches!" he cried to Murat, as he tossed the papers to him, "they have lost me Italy!" He took at once the resolution to quit his army and return to France. This he felt that he could do with honour and with no loss of fame, since his own recent victory over the Turks at Aboukir.

The design was, however, as policy required, kept strictly secret till the very moment for its execution. General Bonaparte had already given orders to Admiral Ganteaume to keep his two remaining frigates ready for sea, and without any previous announcement to his army he went on board at midnight on the 22nd of August. He took with him a few of his most devoted followers, as Murat, Berthier, Lannes, and left the chief command in Egypt to General Kleber, a brave soldier of Alsace. His voyage was protracted to an unusual length by adverse winds, but he succeeded in keeping clear of the British fleet. At length on the forty-fifth

day he neared the coast of France at Fréjus. The people of that town, on learning that the conqueror of Italy had returned, set no bounds to their joy and exultation; they broke through the laws of quarantine, and bore him in triumph to the shore.

Proceeding to Paris, the young General was greeted with like expressions of the popular feeling in his favour. With this support, though not without the aid of a military force, he was enabled to effect the Revolution known in French history by its date in the Republican calendar, the eighteenth of Brumaire, or in ours the ninth of November. The Directory was overthrown, and a new Constitution was framed, vesting the executive government in three Consuls. These, though colleagues in name, were by no means equal in authority. The First Consul, no other than General Bonaparte, centered in himself, full as much as the Sovereign in a limited monarchy, the principal powers of the State.

Grasping these powers with a vigorous hand, the First Consul at once by various means reduced all parties to his sway. He took measures to conciliate La Vendée and to close the civil war; he took measures to crush the still busy conspiracies of the remaining Jacobins; he applied himself to retrieve the ruined finances; he strove both to recruit and to animate with a spirit like his own the diminished and disheartened armies. But while earnestly preparing for war, and bent on reconquering Italy, he made to England at least an offer of negotiation. Whether, as some assert, he really desired peace with this country, or whether,

as others have thought, his object was rather to gain in France the reputation of a moderate and pacific policy, he took the unusual step of a letter which contained a proposal to treat addressed directly from himself to George the Third.

The letter thus written was despatched by a messenger to London, with a short note from M. Talleyrand to Lord Grenville, requesting its transmission to His Britannic Majesty. At that period the Prime Minister in England was deeply intent on another secret expedition, which he designed for the coast of France. But his views at this time will best be gathered from his own most confidential letters to the War Secretary, who had gone for a few weeks to Scotland.

Mr. Pitt to Mr. Dundas.

"Downing Street, Thursday,
"DEAR DUNDAS, Dec. 12, 1799.

"We have had a Cabinet to-day, and agreed on sending immediate orders to our officers in the Mediterranean to disregard any convention for suffering the French to return from Egypt, and to act accordingly, giving notice of their intentions by a flag of truce to the French commander. It was, however, generally felt that as we determine to prevent the Turks from getting rid of these troublesome visitors, we are bound to make some effort for enabling the Turkish force to act against them with effect. Lord Spencer seemed to think that you had had it at all events in contemplation to propose an expedition from India up the Red Sea; and if such a plan can be made practicable with an adequate force, it would certainly have much to recommend it. Finding your departure is deferred till to-morrow, I write to you,

not for the purpose of proposing to you to delay it any longer, which seems quite unnecessary, but only to beg that either before you set out, or from any resting-place on the road, you will send me your ideas on this subject, as it might be very material, to prevent either disheartening or offending the Porte, that Lord Elgin should be instructed, when he announces our disapprobation of the convention, to accompany that unwelcome communication with some encouraging assurance of our intentions to take effectual steps for co-operating against the enemy, and preventing the consequences of his remaining in Egypt from being attended with danger.

"Ever yours,

"W. P."

"Bromley Hill, Sunday,
Dec. 22, 1799.

"DEAR DUNDAS,

. . . . . .

"I have already stated that I conceive the support to be given to the Royalists may be advantageously combined with our views upon Brest. In the course of our conversations, though I entirely avoided anything which could bring that plan into question, I found both Monsieur and De la Rosière repeatedly bringing it forward; and the latter particularly stated that the Royalist army when in force might easily take such a position as might effectually cut off all communication between Paris and Brest, and intercept all supplies of provision or money by land, while we might maintain a blockade by sea. This alone he considered as very likely to produce a mutiny in the garrison and the crews, and to induce them to give up the place. But at all events such a force in addition to our own would certainly furnish a sufficient covering army, in addition to that which would be necessary to besiege the place. Monsieur de la Rosière was himself

employed in the care of the fortifications, and seems positive that it may be easily taken.

"On considering these circumstances, I thought a full communication on the subject would certainly procure better information than we could any other way obtain, and might also furnish additional means for the execution of the plan; and at the same time the taking Monsieur confidentially into consultation upon it on a strict promise of secrecy seemed to furnish the best chance of preventing its being made a subject of general conversation in his circle. I therefore yesterday conversed with him upon it as an idea which his conversation and De la Rosière's had led me to entertain, and on which I wished further information, but represented to him the necessity of absolute secrecy, and obtained his promise that he would never mention it to any one but De la Rosière and the Bishop of Arras (who is his chief adviser), and that he would obtain a similar promise from them. I explained to him that we should be willing to hold both the place (as long as we retained it) and the French ships in trust for the King, but should consider the Spanish ships as prize. He entered most cordially into the whole of our ideas, and undertook to direct De la Rosière to put us in possession of all his information on the subject, which of course I should likewise immediately communicate to Lord St. Vincent and Sir Charles Grey.

"Yours ever,

"W. P."

"Downing Street, Tuesday,
Dec. 31, 1799.

"DEAR DUNDAS,

. . . . . .

"Having said all that is material for the present with respect to means of war, I have now to tell you (what does not in any degree supersede the former

consideration) that to-day has brought us the overture from the Consul in the shape of a letter to the King, a copy of which I enclose. It is, as you will see, very civil in its terms; and seems, by the phrase which describes the two countries as being both more powerful than their security requires, to point at their being willing to give up at least a part of the French conquests if we do the same as to ours. It is, however, very little material, in my opinion, to speculate on the probable terms, as I think we can have nothing to do but to decline all negotiation at the present moment, on the ground that the actual situation of France does not as yet hold out any solid security to be derived from negotiation, taking care, at the same time, to express strongly the eagerness with which we should embrace any opening for general peace whenever such solid security shall appear attainable. This may, I think, be so expressed as to convey to the people of France that the shortest road to peace is by effecting the restoration of Royalty, and thereby to increase the chance of that most desirable of all issues to the war; but at the same time so as in no degree to preclude us from treating even with the present Government, if it should prevail and be able to establish itself firmly, in spite of Jacobins on the one hand and Royalists on the other. This is my present view of the subject, and is very conformable to what seemed Grenville's opinion, in a conversation which I had with him yesterday before the letter had arrived, as well as to that of Lord Spencer and Windham, who are the only members of Government whom I have seen since. I am afraid we must return some answer before I can hear from you, but I think you will not see anything to object to in this line.

"Yours ever,

"W. P."

"Holwood, Saturday,
"DEAR DUNDAS, Jan. 11, 1800.

"I was in hopes long before this time to have been able to write to you fully on the project relative to the French coast; but Sir Charles Grey has continued so much indisposed that I have not been able to see him again, and have not received from him anything like a full and deliberate opinion. I find, however, that both he and Colonel Twiss entertain at present a very unfavourable opinion of the strength of the post proposed to be occupied, and Sir Charles seems also to entertain (as it was very probable he would) a very strong and obstinate prejudice against the Chouans and every description of French, which makes him apparently unwilling to estimate impartially their real strength. Under these circumstances I see no prospect of our having at present any such report as would justify encouraging the scheme, and I shall therefore endeavour to keep the whole subject in suspense till your return, when the whole plan of campaign must be an immediate object of full discussion. I am afraid we shall find great difficulty in arranging any scheme which will be attended with advantages as important as ought to result from the employment of so large and expensive a force as that which we possess or are bringing forward; and operations on a small scale and in quarters not decisive, though better than absolute inactivity, are not suited to the present crisis, in which I feel, as you do, that we must make our impression in the course of the ensuing campaign, or we shall find our means fail us.

"Belleisle is certainly for one operation very advantageous, if upon further examination it proves to be attended with no insurmountable obstacles from addi-

tional works and defences since the former expedition; but that once accomplished, I see nothing that remains but mere demonstrations, or at most flying and predatory expeditions (which may alarm and distract, and be of some benefit as a diversion both to the Austrians and the Royalists, but will be of no real consequence in themselves), unless, upon full consideration, we think our force sufficient to justify risking a great army either in Brittany, with the view of taking Brest with the aid of the Royalists, or between the Seine and the Somme for the purpose of occupying at least the district between the two rivers and carrying terror to the capital, even if we do not advance thither. Either of these enterprises, if prosperous, will decide the fate of the war in our favour; but it must be confessed that the failure of either would be nearly as decisive against us. In these circumstances I do not feel that the attempt can be justified unless, on full examination, and with the best military opinions we can procure, the chances in favour of success strongly preponderate; but if that should be the case, some unavoidable risk from the contrary chances ought not, I think, to deter us, and you will, I believe, be of the same opinion.

"I hope the answer to Bonaparte has appeared to you conformable to the general ideas I had stated to you, and in which I was glad to find you so entirely concurred. I hope, too, that you have not been disappointed in your expectation of getting rid of your sore throat on such easy terms, and that we shall see you quite well by the end of the week in which Parliament meets. We must, of course, lay the letter from Bonaparte and our answer before the House on the Tuesday or Wednesday; but I mean to put off all discussion upon them till the Monday following, which

will be the 27th, in order to give you full time without breaking in on your original plan. We must determine, in the mean time, exactly what line to hold respecting the production of any papers or information on the subject of the expedition to Holland. There will be some difficulty in the selection, but I continue to think we must give enough to clear away all possible doubts about the sufficiency of supplies, medical assistance; and transport for bringing the troops back. Pray let me know your ideas, as some questions will probably be asked, though perhaps no motion made, before you return. "Yours ever,

"W. P."

Yet after all, eagerly as this expedition was pressed forward by Mr. Pitt, so many obstacles and causes of delay arose that the design was finally abandoned.

The offer of negotiation on the part of the French Government had been considered with great care by the members of the Cabinet in London. There seems to have been no difference nor wavering of opinion. It was agreed that the answer ought not to come from the King, nor yet go to the First Consul. It should be addressed in due form by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs to the Minister of the same rank in the other country—by Lord Grenville to M. Talleyrand. In this well-weighed reply, which bears the date of the 4th of January, Lord Grenville stated that His Majesty saw no reason to depart from the forms long established in Europe for transacting business with foreign States. The King had never had any other view in this contest than to maintain against all aggres-

sion the rights and happiness of his subjects. He could not hope that the necessity of contending for these objects would be removed by entering at the present moment into negotiation with those whom a fresh Revolution had so recently placed in power, until it should appear that the danger had really ceased, and that the restless schemes of destruction which had endangered the very existence of civil society were at length finally relinquished.

This answer of Lord Grenville was intended to close the correspondence, but it had not that effect. A rejoinder came from M. Talleyrand. He still pressed the opening of a negotiation between France and England, declaring that France had been all through the Revolution animated by a love of peace, and had been driven to war by the unprovoked hostility of other European powers. In another reply, dated the 20th of January, Lord Grenville declined to debate the latter question or to proceed with the former; and he lightly touched on the important fact that the overtures of France on this occasion were addressed to England only, and did not extend to her allies. Whenever, he said, the attainment of peace could be sufficiently provided for, His Majesty would eagerly concert with his allies the means of immediate and joint negotiation.

On the next day after this despatch, on the 21st of January, the two Houses met again after their long adjournment. The correspondence which had passed on the overtures from France was immediately laid before them, introduced by a message from the King.

On the 28th there was moved in the Lords an Address in reply, expressive of concurrence in the course which the English Government had taken.

Lord Grenville himself moved the Address in the House of Peers. His speech, elaborate and eloquent, was answered also with ability by the Duke of Bedford and Lord Holland. In the division which ensued the Address was carried by an immense majority — 92 against 6. One name among these six may have caused some surprise: it was the name of Lord Camelford, the head of the Pitt family and the brother of Lady Grenville.

In the Commons a week afterwards there was a longer and a fiercer fight. There the corresponding Address was moved by Dundas. Whitbread was the first to oppose it in (as usual with him) a pithy and a pungent speech. This afforded scope to Canning for an admirable display of both wit and eloquence. Erskine continued the debate in a speech very far superior to his customary speeches in the House of Commons, and bearing some faint likeness to his great achievements at the Bar. After him the Prime Minister rose, and in a luminous argument explained and defended the whole conduct of the Government. "As a sincere lover of peace," he said, "I cannot be content with its nominal attainment; I must be desirous of pursuing that system which promises to attain in the end the permanent enjoyment of its blessings for this country and for Europe. As a sincere lover of peace I will not sacrifice it by grasping at the shadow when the reality is not in truth within

my reach.—'Cur igitur pacem nolo? Quia infida est, quia periculosa, quia esse non potest.'"[1]

The Prime Minister was followed by Mr. Fox, who for this day only had re-appeared in his place. He owned that he could not justify the French Government in many of its proceedings, but he summed up his own main argument as follows:—"I think you ought to have given a civil, clear, and explicit answer to the overture which was fairly and honourably made. If you were desirous that the negotiation should have included all your allies as the means of bringing about a general peace, you should have told Bonaparte so; but I believe you were afraid of his agreeing to the proposal. You took that method before. Ay, but you say, the people were anxious for peace in 1797. I say they are friends to peace now, and I am confident that you will one day own it; but by the laws which you have made restraining the expression of the sense of the people, their opinion cannot now be heard as loudly and unequivocally as before."

Notwithstanding the return of the seceders for that day, the result of the division was greatly in favour of the Government. The Address as moved by Mr. Dundas was carried by 265 votes against 64.

From these numbers it appears that the arguments of the Opposition had not produced much effect upon either of the Houses. Nor yet do they appear to have produced much effect upon the public. There can be

[1] These words are from the seventh Philippic of Cicero (cap. 3). But the first epithet in the original is *turpis;* for which Mr. Pitt, no doubt by design, has substituted *infida.*

no stronger instance than that of Mr. Wilberforce. He had early professed his zeal for peace; he had on that account publicly dissevered himself from Mr. Pitt; yet when Mr. Pitt showed him the official correspondence previous to its publication, and explained to him the reasons for it, we may observe the effect upon his mind: —"January 24. I wrote to Pitt, and he sent for me to town. I saw him. Till then I was strongly disposed to condemn the rejection of Bonaparte's offer to treat; greatly shocked at it; he shook me.—January 27. Slowly came over to approve of the rejection of Bonaparte's offer, though not of Lord Grenville's letter." It must also be acknowledged that Mr. Fox, and those who thought with him, descanted too much in their speeches on what they deemed the exhausted state of England, and the buoyant resources of France—that they seemed to think no conditions hard which the enemy demanded, and that they gave some handle to the popular reproach at that time applied to them, as clamorous for "peace upon any terms."

A few days afterwards Mr. Sheridan in the one House, and Lord Holland in the other, discussed the late expedition to Holland, and moved for a Committee of the whole House to inquire into the causes of its failure. The objects and the measures of the Government were unsparingly criticised, but the Opposition, with much prudence, far from censuring the conduct of the Duke of York, concurred with the Ministers in eulogies upon him. In vindication of himself and of his colleagues, Mr. Dundas contended that the expedition was not in truth the failure which it had been described. In the

attempt to rescue the United Provinces from the yoke of France, we had certainly not succeeded. But we had taken between six and seven thousand seamen who might have been employed in the French service, and forty thousand tons of shipping which might have annoyed the British trade. We had withdrawn from the general operations of the war during this campaign forty thousand French troops, and by the capture of the fleet we had put an end to all further prospect of invading Great Britain.

On this occasion the minority in the House of Lords mustered only 6, and in the Commons only 45.

On the 13th of February a Message from the King informed both Houses that he was concerting arrangements with the Emperor, the Elector of Bavaria, and other German Princes, to strengthen the common cause, and appealed to Parliament for the means of making such pecuniary advances as might be needed. When Mr. Pitt, four days later, moved an Address in reply, he explained that for the present half a million would be required, with two millions more in prospect on the completion of the treaties.

Mr. Tierney, who in Fox's absence was considered as the leader of the scanty Opposition ranks, rose to resist the Address and the subsidies which it involved. With great earnestness, and with some effect, he inveighed against the whole course of Mr. Pitt. Notwithstanding, he cried, the "ifs and buts," and the diplomatic special pleading which the Ministers always introduce on the subject, he was persuaded they would never be satisfied with any terms of peace short of the restoration of the

Bourbons. Why else was the war continued? It had for some time been defended as just and necessary; but these words had died a natural death. Jacobinism was an indescribable phantom; its power and influence in France were by recent events almost annihilated. "I would demand of the Minister," he added, "to state in one sentence what is the object of the war."

The speech of Pitt, thus suddenly called upon to rise, may deserve to rank among the most successful instances of a ready reply. "The Hon. gentleman," he began, "defies me to state in a single sentence the object of the war. Sir, I will do so in a single word. The object, I tell him, is Security! Security against the greatest danger that ever threatened the world—a danger such as never existed in any past period of society. . . . . But how long is it since the Hon. gentleman and his friends discovered that the dangers of Jacobinism have ceased to exist? How long is it since they have found that the cause of the French Revolution is not the cause of liberty? How or where did the Hon. gentleman discover that the Jacobinism of Robespierre, of Barère, of the five Directors, of the Triumvirate, has all disappeared because it has all been centred in one man, who was reared and nursed in its bosom, whose celebrity was gained under its auspices, and who was at once the child and the champion of all its atrocities?"

Proceeding next to vindicate at length the alliance with Germany, Pitt then applied himself to the often repeated, and as often contradicted, assertion of Mr. Tierney, that the war was carried on for the resto-

ration of the House of Bourbon. "Here the Hon. gentleman," he said, "has assumed the foundation of the argument, and has left no ground for controverting it or for explanation, because he says that any attempt at explanation is the mere ambiguous language of *Ifs* and *Buts*, and of special pleading. Now I never had much liking for special pleading, and if ever I had any it is by this time almost entirely gone. He has besides so abridged me in the use of particles, that, although I am not particularly attached to the sound of an *If* or a *But*, I should be much obliged to him if he would give me some others to supply their places. The restoration of the French Monarchy I consider a most desirable object, because I think that it would afford the best security to this country and to Europe. *But* this object may not be attainable, and, *if* it be not attainable, we must be satisfied with the best security we can find independent of it. Peace is most desirable to this country, *but* negotiation may be attended with greater evils than could be counterbalanced by any resulting benefits. And *if* this is found to be the case; *if* it affords no prospect of security; *if* it threatens all the evils which we have been struggling to avert; *if*, on the contrary, the prosecution of the war affords the prospect of attaining complete security; and *if* it may be prosecuted with increasing commerce, increasing means, and increasing prosperity, except what may result from the visitation of the seasons; then I say that it is prudent in us not to negotiate at the present moment. These are my *Buts* and my *Ifs*. This is my plea, and on no other do I wish to be tried by God and my country."

When Pitt sat down the argument was ably continued by Wilberforce and Sheridan, and closed, on the part of Ministers, by Windham. Then, the House dividing, the Address to the Crown was carried by 162 votes against 19. Many years afterwards I have heard divers persons congratulate themselves on their good fortune at being present as spectators in the Gallery or as members of the House that evening, more especially as regarded the speech of Mr. Pitt. They spoke in the highest terms of the great impression which that speech produced. Certainly one of its phrases, "the child and champion of Jacobinism," became for many months a popular watchword in England, until the Anti-Jacobin energy shown by the First Consul and his firm hold of the Sovereign Power had belied its application.

The minority in the House of Commons received, however, some support from the citizens of London. A meeting was held at Common Hall, attended by at least two thousand persons, and there a large majority voted and signed a petition praying for an immediate negotiation with France. This step was followed by further proceedings in both Houses. In the Lords Earl Stanhope, emerging from his retirement of five years, moved an Address imploring the House most earnestly, and, as he said, upon his knees, to put an end to the calamities of this cruel war. Acting, as was his usual fault, without concert, his motion had little effect. After a very few and very slighting words from the Lord Chancellor, the House divided, when only one other Peer (it was Lord Camelford) stood forth on Earl Stanhope's side.

In the Commons Mr. Tierney had more support. He took the course of an abstract Resolution, declaring that it was not just or necessary to carry on war for the purpose of restoring the monarchy of France. This was met by John Eliot, next brother of Pitt's friend, who moved the Orders of the day, and an animated debate ensued, but in the division Tierney was followed into the lobby by a force of thirty-four.

At nearly the same time Mr. Pitt unfolded his financial measures in the House of Commons. He had renewed the Bank Charter for twenty-one years on the Company advancing to the public 3,000,000*l.* without interest for six years. This was bitterly opposed by Mr. Tierney, though with much more, so far as we can trace them, of invective than of argument. "I really think," he said, "that the country is dealing in *assignats*, in flimsy paper, and that a mean plan of state juggling is carried on between Government and the Bank; Ministers courting the Bank, and the Bank courting Ministers." Mr. Tierney does not seem to have quite made up his mind which it was of the two parties to the contract that had gained the unfair advantage.

Mr. Pitt had also contracted a loan for eighteen millions and a half, which would be required for the public service of the year, the terms evincing a most prosperous state of public credit, since it had been readily subscribed at an interest of less than four and three-quarters per cent. No additional taxes were proposed, except a small augmentation of the duties upon spirits, and five per cent. on all teas valued at more

than two shillings and sixpence the pound. The principal critic of Mr. Pitt's financial schemes was still Mr. Tierney, yet even Mr. Tierney acknowledged that the Minister's Budget had exceeded his most sanguine expectations.

The prosperous state of the public credit was the more remarkable, since the people were at this time suffering great scarcity and distress from the late deficient harvest. To mitigate the evil many measures were proposed and some adopted. In the House of Lords a form of agreement, prepared by the Archbishop of Canterbury, was carried as a Resolution. Every subscriber to that agreement bound himself to limit the quantity of wheaten bread consumed in his family to one quartern loaf a week for each person. In the Commons a Committee was appointed to consider the laws which regulated the "Assize of Bread." The Committee in their first Report recommended the self-denying system, as already sanctioned by the House of Lords. They further recommended a law which should prohibit bakers from selling bread until it had been baked twenty-four hours, and a law to this effect was passed accordingly. The Committee also expressed their full approval of the policy which Mr. Pitt had steadily pursued, on the principles of Adam Smith, and in spite of much pressure to the contrary—of abstaining, as a Government, from all interference in the purchase of corn in foreign markets, conceiving that the speculations of private individuals gave the most likely prospect of producing a sufficient supply.

This, the first Report of the Committee, was presented

in February. A month later the second followed. The Committee proposed a bounty, to serve as an indemnity, to importers of grain from the Mediterranean and America before the end of October, if, in consequence of a good harvest, it should decline in price. This recommendation and some others in the same Report were adopted. On the other hand, Mr. Whitbread egregiously failed in a renewed attempt to regulate by legislation the wages of agricultural labourers.

Sir John Mitford, who was now Attorney-General—for Sir John Scott had by this time become Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, with a Peerage as Lord Eldon—brought in a Bill during this Session to continue the suspension of the Habeas Corpus. There were debates and divisions in both Houses, but in each the minority against the measure was extremely small.

In the midst of these Parliamentary proceedings the public was startled by the news that the King's life had been attempted. On the evening of the 15th of May His Majesty, accompanied by the Queen and the Princesses, went to Drury Lane Theatre. As he entered his box a man in the pit raised himself upon one of the benches and fired at the King a horse-pistol, happily without effect. The King showed great courage and composure, advancing firmly to the front of the box, and calmly, through his opera-glass, looking round the house. Meanwhile the offender had been seized and conveyed across the orchestra to a private room, where he was examined by several magistrates. It appeared that his name was James Hadfield; that he had served in the army in Flanders under the Duke of York; and

that he had there received some dangerous wounds in the head. Being subsequently brought to trial in the Court of King's Bench, the mental malady resulting from those wounds was clearly proved by several witnesses. He was sent to Bedlam, and he survived his sentence forty years.

But the main and leading event of this year, and on this side the Straits of Calais, was the Union with Ireland. I do not propose to relate in any detail the final passage of the Act through the Houses of Parliament at Dublin. It was marked on both sides by great eloquence and great asperity. Mr. Grattan desired to re-enter the House of Commons for the express purpose of opposing the measure. He obtained, accordingly, a seat by purchase for the close borough of Wicklow, paying, as is alleged, the sum of 2,400*l.*[2] Suffering from recent illness, and supported to his place by two friends, he rose, nevertheless, to speak on the first night of the meeting, the 15th of January, when an Anti-Union amendment had been moved by Sir Laurence Parsons. It was a striking and a solemn sight to behold the eminent patriot, the author of the Act of Legislative Equality in 1782, raising his voice once more to vindicate and maintain his past achievement. He spoke on this subject, as might be expected, with extraordinary weight and force; and he levelled his declamation more especially against the published speech of Mr. Pitt. "In all that is advanced," he said, "the Minister does not argue, but foretell. Now, you cannot

[2] See the Cornwallis Papers, vol. iii. p. 161.

answer a prophet; you can only disbelieve him. The thing which he proposes to buy is what cannot be sold —Liberty. For it he has nothing to give. Everything of value which you possess you obtained under a free Constitution; if you resign this, you must not only be slaves, but fools." The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Isaac Corry, replied to Mr. Grattan with great ability; and, after a debate of eighteen hours, the House divided late on the morning of the 16th. In that great and, as it proved, decisive trial of strength, the Anti-Union amendment was rejected by a majority of 42, the numbers being 96 and 138.

A week later the Lord Lieutenant, writing in confidence to his brother the Bishop, sums up as follows his general impressions of the public feeling: "In Dublin and its vicinity the people are all outrageous against Union. In the other parts of the kingdom the general sense is undoubtedly in its favour. It is, however, easy for men of influence to obtain Addresses and Resolutions on either side."

As the principal spokesman at this time of the administration in the Irish House of Commons, Lord Castlereagh evinced that clear sagacity, that constant readiness, and that resolute courage, which, combined with his high gentlemanly bearing, supplied in him the place of eloquence, and subsequently raised him to the highest offices in England. On the 5th of February he moved preliminary Resolutions, giving an outline of the intended scheme. As to representation, he said, the object should be to take it in the combined ratio of numbers and of wealth. Now, the population of Great

Britain was supposed to exceed ten millions, and that of Ireland to be between three millions and a half and four millions. Here was a proportion of more than two to one. On the other hand, the contributions of Great Britain were to the contributions of Ireland, as intended to be fixed, about as seven and a half to one.[3] These two proportions taken together would produce a mean proportion of about five and a half to one. If, therefore, to the British House of Commons, consisting of five hundred and fifty-eight members, Ireland should send one hundred, "I am of opinion," said Lord Castlereagh, "she will be fairly and adequately represented."

With respect to the Irish House of Lords, it was intended that there should go to England as its representatives four spiritual Peers, chosen by a system of rotation, and twenty-eight temporal Peers, elected, not as in Scotland, for the Parliament, but for their lives. In two other particulars, likewise, there was a favourable deviation from the precedent of the Scottish Peerage. Any English Commoner who had received an Irish Peerage might still sit as a Commoner for any but an Irish seat in the House of Commons, on waiving for the time his privileges as a Peer of Ireland. Nor was the Royal Prerogative of creating Peers of Ireland entirely abolished; it was limited to one for every three extinctions until the number of Peers should be finally reduced to one hundred, exclusive of such as were also English Peers.

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[3] These calculations, probably from some error of the printers, are very incorrectly given in Mr. Adolphus's History, vol. vii. p. 362. See also Coote's History of the Union, p. 358.

The circumstances of the time, said Lord Castlereagh, did not allow, as he desired, a complete incorporation of commercial interests. As obstacles, there were first the protecting duties required by some branches of the Irish manufactures, and secondly, the heavier taxation to be borne by the British people. But it was proposed in a liberal spirit to Ireland that articles exported to Great Britain should pay a duty equal to that which for the same articles was imposed on British subjects.

To the position of the Established Church Lord Castlereagh next adverted. "So long as the separation shall continue, the Church of Ireland will ever be liable to be impeached upon local grounds. Nor will it be able to maintain itself effectually against the argument of physical force. But when once completely incorporated with the Church of England, it will be placed upon such a strong and natural foundation as to be above all apprehensions or alarms." With this view it was proposed to declare the continuance and preservation of that United Church an essential and fundamental article of the Union.

"It had been said"—so continued Lord Castlereagh —"that the Catholic Clergy have been *bribed* to the support of this measure. This is an illiberal imputation, and one devoid of truth; for it is known that an arrangement for the Clergy, both Catholic and Protestant Dissenters, has long been in the contemplation of His Majesty's Ministers."

On concluding his statement and laying before the House his Resolutions, Lord Castlereagh was followed

by Mr. George Ponsonby in an able and bitter speech. A most keen debate ensued, but on dividing, the propriety of considering the King's Message in favour of an Union was affirmed by 158 against 115. On the 17th, when the debate was again renewed, there was a sharp personal altercation between Mr. Grattan and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Corry. Nor was the quarrel between the two orators confined to words. There was a duel even before the adjournment of the House; and the Chancellor of the Exchequer was wounded in the arm.

In the Irish House of Lords, the debate which ensued on the 10th of February was especially distinguished by a luminous speech from the Chancellor, the Earl of Clare. It was a speech of four hours; and the most remarkable, next to that of Mr. Grattan, which was delivered in Ireland through the whole course of that year. "It produced," says Lord Cornwallis, "the greatest surprise and effect on the Lords and on the audience, which was uncommonly numerous." The division, at half-past three in the morning, gave to the Government, including proxies, a majority of 75 against 26.

The more favourable reception of the projected Union in both the Irish Houses was greatly promoted by a change since last year in the measure itself. The Ministers in England had determined to grant a compensation in money for the boroughs to be disfranchised. No less a sum than a million and a quarter was assigned for this purpose, and each proprietor or patron of a borough was to receive for each seat 7,500*l*. The two largest

shares by far fell to Lord Downshire and Lord Ely. The former, who had seven seats, received 52,500*l.*; the latter, who had six seats, 45,000*l.* This compensation was, I need scarcely say, quite independent of the course in Parliament which might be taken on the Union. Lord Downshire, for example, voted in opposition, and Lord Ely in favour of the measure. But peerages, both Irish and English, and other preferments or favours in both countries, were freely, nay, it may be said, lavishly promised to those wavering politicians whose minds, or at least whose votes, hung suspended in the balance.

The Resolutions, comprising the outline of the Union, being passed by both the Houses in Dublin, and accompanied by a joint Address, were transmitted to the King. On the 2nd of April His Majesty sent them to both the Houses in London, with a Message declaring his "most sincere satisfaction," and urging "the speedy execution of a work so happily begun."

It was designed that in the British Parliament there should be passed corresponding Resolutions and a corresponding Address; and on the 21st of April, Mr. Pitt in the Commons, and Lord Grenville in the Peers, moved that the House should go into Committee on the question. Mr. Pitt, in the course of his comprehensive and masterly speech, took occasion to review his own opinions on Reform.

"As I do not wish," he said, "to have the least reserve with the House, I must say that if anything could throw a doubt upon the question of Union—if anything could in my mind counterbalance the advantages that must result from the Union, it would be the

necessity of disturbing the representation of England; but that necessity fortunately does not exist. In stating this, I have not forgotten what I have myself formerly said and sincerely felt upon this subject; but I know that all opinions must inevitably be subservient to times and circumstances; and that man who talks of his consistency merely because he holds the same opinion for ten or fifteen years, when the circumstances under which it was originally formed are totally changed, is a slave to the most idle vanity. Seeing all that I have seen since the period to which I allude; considering how little chance there is of that species of reform to which alone I looked, and which is as different from the modern schemes of reform as the latter are from the Constitution; seeing that where the greatest changes have taken place the most dreadful consequences have ensued, and which have not been confined to that country where the change was exercised, but have spread their malignant influence in almost every quarter of the globe, and shaken the fabric of every government; seeing that, in this general shock, the Constitution of Great Britain has alone remained pure and untouched in its vital principles; when I see that it has resisted all the efforts of Jacobinism, sheltering itself under the pretence of a love of liberty; when I see that it has supported itself against the open attacks of its enemies, and against the more dangerous reforms of its professed friends; that it has defeated the unwearied machinations of France, and the no less persevering efforts of Jacobins in England; and that, during the whole of the contest, it has uniformly maintained the

confidence of the people:—I say, when I consider all these circumstances, I should be ashamed of myself if any former opinions of mine could now induce me to think that the form of representation which, in such times as the present, has been found amply sufficient to protect the interests and secure the happiness of the people, should be idly and wantonly disturbed from any love of experiment, or any predilection for theory. Upon this subject I think it right to state the inmost thoughts of my mind; I think it right to declare my most decided opinion, that, even if the times were proper for experiments, any, even the slightest change in such a Constitution must be considered an evil."

These words at first sight appear decisive against all future projects of Reform. Yet it should be observed that Mr. Pitt lays down the evil of making "any, even the slightest change" in the constitution of the House of Commons as dependent on the condition, among others, of that House in troubled times retaining the "confidence of the people of England." If this confidence should cease, that constitution ought not to endure. With this limitation in view, Lord Macaulay states as follows, but perhaps a little too strongly, the general conclusion to be drawn: "Though Pitt thought that such a Reform could not be made while the passions excited by the French Revolution were raging, he never uttered a word indicating that he should not be prepared at a more convenient season to bring the question forward a fourth time."[4]

[4] Biographies, p. 234, ed. 1860.

We learn from Mr. Fox's private correspondence that he was hostile to the scheme of Irish Union. He thought it "one of the most unequivocal attempts at establishing the principles as well as the practice of despotism."[5] Yet, so thinking, he would not leave his retirement at St. Ann's to oppose it. He left his place to be supplied by Grey, Sheridan, and Tierney. These gentlemen, with all their great ability, had but small success upon the question. An amendment, moved by Mr. Grey, against the entire scheme, pending an appeal to the Irish people, was rejected by 236 to 30, while in the other House only three Peers—Lords Holland, King, and Derby—recorded their votes against it.

The Resolutions affirming the plan of Union having passed in England as in Ireland, a Bill founded upon them was introduced and carried through in both countries. The English Bill received the Royal Assent on the 2nd of July. It was enacted that the election for the representative Peers of Ireland should be forthwith made, and that the members already representing the counties and the boroughs that were to be retained should be declared to be still the members for them in the United Parliament. With these accessions the United—or, as it was now termed, the "Imperial"—Parliament might meet for its first Session on any day appointed by His Majesty after the 1st of January, 1801.

The Session was closed by the King on the 29th of

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[5] Letter of Feb. 4, 1799, as published in the Life of Grattan, vol. iv. p. 435.

July, and his Speech expressed his peculiar satisfaction at the passing of the Act of Union. "This great measure," he said, "on which my wishes have been long earnestly bent, I shall ever consider as the happiest event of my reign, being persuaded that nothing could so effectually contribute to extend to my Irish subjects the full participation of the blessings derived from the British Constitution."

The King's ready acquiescence in these last words when framed and recommended by his Ministers, may have led Mr. Pitt, however erroneously, to think that His Majesty's objections to the Roman Catholics were in no small measure mollified.

CHAPTER XXIX.

1800 — 1801.

Dissatisfaction of Lord Wellesley — Convention of El Arish — Battle of Heliopolis — Death of Kleber — Good faith of England vindicated — Bonaparte enters Milan — Battle of Marengo — Successes of Moreau in Germany — Overture of Lord Minto, and consequent negotiations — Their failure — Malta surrenders to the English — Differences in the Cabinet — Dearth of provisions — Pitt's broken health — His views and those of Grenville on Free Trade — Meeting of Parliament — Remedial measures for the scarcity — The *True Briton* — Battle of Hohenlinden — Treaty of Luneville — Confederacy of the Northern Powers — First Meeting of the Imperial Parliament — Roman Catholic Question — Political Intrigues — Pitt's plan laid before the Cabinet — His letter to the King — The King's reply — Pitt resigns — Succeeded by Addington.

In the course of this summer Mr. Pitt had the mortification to find that, in advising His Majesty to confer an Irish Marquisate on the Governor-General of India, he had by no means satisfied his friend. On the contrary, there came to him a letter from Calcutta full of—or rather overflowing with—complaints.

Marquis Wellesley to Mr. Pitt.

"My dear Pitt, "Fort William, April 28, 1800.

. . . . . .

"With the warmest acknowledgment of the zealous and anxious interest which all my friends have taken in my success, I cannot describe to you the anguish of my mind in feeling myself bound by every sense of duty and honour to declare to you my bitter disappoint-

ment at the reception which the King has given to my services, and at the ostensible mark of favour which he has conferred upon me. . . . In England as in India, the disproportion between the service and the reward will be imputed to some opinion existing in the King's mind of my being disqualified by some personal incapacity to receive the reward of my conduct. I leave you to judge what the effect of such an impression is likely to be on the minds of those whom I am appointed to govern; and with what spirit or hope of success I can now attempt to take that lead among the allies which it must now be the policy of the British Government to assume in India. I will confess to you openly that as I was confident there had been nothing *Irish* or *Pinchbeck* in my conduct or in its result, I felt an equal confidence that I should find nothing Irish or Pinchbeck in my reward. . . . . My health must necessarily suffer with my spirits; and the mortifying situation in which I am placed will soon become intolerable to me. You must therefore expect either to hear of some calamity happening to me here, or to see me in England; where I shall arrive (*si ita Diis visum*) in perfectly good spirits, in the most cordial good temper with all my friends, and in the most firm resolution to pass the remainder of my life in the country, endeavouring to forget what has been inflicted upon me, and praying—*Novos consules, legionesque Britannas, ita in Asiâ bellum gerere, ut, me consule, bella gesta sunt.*

"Ever, dear Pitt, yours most affectionately,

"MORNINGTON.

"(not having yet received my *double-gilt Potatoe.*)"

It should be added, however, that the anguish which Lord Wellesley here expresses did not at any time

affect his feelings of personal friendship. He continued to write to Mr. Pitt, whether in or out of office, in the most cordial, nay, affectionate terms.

In Egypt, the departure of General Bonaparte had cast a gloom on General Kleber and the remaining troops. To return to France became at once their ardent aspiration and their common cry. On the other hand the Turkish army, which was now again advancing, had no other object than to effect the evacuation of Egypt. It was a matter of perfect indifference to the Grand Vizier how else after their departure the French troops might be employed, and he was well disposed to guarantee to them a free passage to France.

Off the coast at this time there was cruising a British man of war and French prize, Le Tigre, detached from the fleet of Lord Keith, and commanded by Sir Sidney Smith. Sir Sidney had no authority whatever to treat with the French in Egypt—no authority either from his superior officer, Lord Keith, or from the Ministry in England. Nevertheless he took a forward part in urging a negotiation between the Grand Vizier and General Kleber. He allowed the agents from each to meet and hold their first conferences on board his ship, these conferences being followed by others in the Turkish camp. Finally, on the 24th of January, was concluded the Convention of El Arish,—concluded with the full sanction, though without the signature, of Sir Sidney Smith. The stipulations were that the French should leave the country, and be conveyed to France in vessels provided by the Porte. They were to retain their arms, baggage, and effects; and there was no clause restrain-

ing them from immediate service in any other quarter of the world.

Meanwhile the chance of some such treaty on the part of the Turks had occurred to the Ministers in England. They did not think that England should consent to it; they did not think that the mistress of the Mediterranean (as the victory of Nelson had made her) should allow twenty-five thousand troops equipped on all points to be quietly brought home and left free to turn their arms at once against her or her allies. These general views of the British Cabinet were much confirmed by the desponding tone of an intercepted despatch from Kleber, written immediately after Bonaparte's return. Therefore, on the 17th of December, the Admiralty had sent instructions to Lord Keith, directing him not to consent to any treaty in which it was not stipulated that the French troops should lay down their arms and become prisoners of war. Lord Keith, who was then in Port Mahon, at once transmitted these orders to Sir Sidney Smith, but they did not arrive until after the Convention of El Arish had been signed. Lord Keith also announced the orders which he had received in a letter to the French General at Cairo. At the mere thought of a surrender, the martial spirit of Kleber was fully roused. He published Lord Keith's letter in the Orders of the Day to his troops, adding to it these laconic words: "Soldiers! we can only answer such insolence by victories; prepare to fight."

Nor was this a mere empty boast. The Grand Vizier had by this time advanced to the neighbourhood of Cairo with his Turkish hordes. At the ruins

of Heliopolis he found himself assailed with irresistible fury by the French; and his raw levies, notwithstanding their vast superiority of numbers, were scattered far and wide. The Grand Vizier himself, with only a few hundred horsemen, fled beyond the desert and sought shelter in Syria. But only a few weeks later the victorious career of Kleber was suddenly closed. On the 14th of June he fell beneath the poniard of an assassin, a fanatic Mussulman, on the terrace of his house at Cairo.

During this time the British Government had become aware how deeply a British officer was implicated in the Convention of El Arish. On their knowledge of that fact their determination wholly changed. But perhaps their whole course of policy upon this subject will best be shown in the words of Mr. Pitt as addressed some months later to the House of Commons.

Mr. Pitt said:—

"Before the order alluded to [that of the 17th of December] went out, there was no supposition that Sir Sidney was then in Egypt, nor that he would be a party to the treaty between the Ottoman Porte and the French General. When he did take a part in that transaction, it was not a direct part. He did not exercise any direct power; if he had done so, he would have done it without authority; he had no such power from his situation, for he was not commander-in-chief. . . . . Sir Sidney was, at first, no party to this treaty. That he sincerely desired it to take place, that it was concluded on board his ship, and that he was a witness

to the transaction, was very true; but he never affected to do it on the part of this country. The order of the 17th of December was to signify to our officer that we should not regard the treaty between the Turks and the French wherever it tended to affect our state and condition in the Mediterranean; and what was there in this that could be considered as wrong? What legitimate power had the Ottoman Porte and a French General to dispose of our interest in the Mediterranean?—Now, upon the subject of the breach of faith he would say a word. The order was, not that we should break the treaty to which we were no party, but to give notice that, as we were no party to it, there was no power to dispose of our interest; but, the moment we found that a convention had been assented to by a British officer, although the policy of it we disapproved, we sent directions to conform to it."[1]

When, however, the new instructions of the English Ministers reached their officers in the Mediterranean, the views of the French at Cairo were no longer the same. Menou, who as the senior General succeeded Kleber in the chief command, had never been inclined —and was still less so since the victory of Heliopolis— to relinquish Egypt without a blow. He refused to renew the Convention when its renewal was tendered to him. Hostilities, therefore, were continued off the coast, and an English expedition was preparing. To the results of that expedition I shall come hereafter. Meanwhile I venture to affirm that on a careful review

[1] Second Speech of Mr. Pitt, November 18, 1800.

of all the circumstances, the case of the Treaty of El Arish, which has sometimes been urged as an imputation against the good faith of England, will be found, in truth, among the strongest proofs of it. The English Ministers had resolved to bear as they deemed a substantial wrong sooner than even the slightest shadow of just reproach. Sooner than disavow one of their officers, even though acting without their authority, they had sent orders to sanction a compact which they did not approve.

In Europe the hopes of Mr. Pitt, as founded on the prolongation of the war, were doomed to utter disappointment. No Russian army took the field in support of the Austrian. Since last year the capricious temper of the Czar had completely veered round. Far from warring against, he was rather inclined to side with France. And France under her new government seemed no longer the same nation which had sustained the manifold reverses of 1799. The First Consul, by his genius and his energy, carried all before him. Darting across the Alps when least expected, by a passage without a parallel since the days of Hannibal, he entered Milan in triumph, and then again darting into Piedmont gave battle to the Austrian army on the plains of Marengo. There, on the 14th of June, he gained a most brilliant victory. The Austrian chief, General Melas, a brave veteran, but oppressed with age and infirmities, found it requisite on the day but one after the battle to sign a convention, by the terms of which the French recovered—not only the fortress of Genoa, which, after a most obstinate defence, had been surrendered by Massena only a few days

before, — not only the fortress of Alessandria, which might have stood as long a siege,—but all their former conquests in northern Italy as far as the river Oglio; and with such great results achieved General Bonaparte was again at Paris on the 3rd of July.

In Germany the French, commanded by General Moreau, had similar success. They crossed the Rhine and Danube; they overran the plains of Bavaria; they entered the gates of Munich. Then, as in Italy, a truce ensued for the summer months, and a negotiation was attempted.

Under such circumstances Lord Minto, the British Ambassador at Vienna, having received fresh instructions from home, announced on the 9th of August that His Britannic Majesty was ready to take part in any negotiation for a general peace. M. Otto, a French gentleman employed by the First Consul, was at this time residing in London as agent for the exchange of prisoners. He was desired to request of Lord Grenville some further explanations on Lord Minto's overture, and a correspondence of six weeks' duration—afterwards laid before Parliament—ensued.

It was stated by the French negotiators that their armistice with Austria was near expiring, and that they would not consent to renew it unless there were also an armistice with England. They proposed a general truce, with full powers of communication both by sea and land, their object of course being to send succours, in spite of the English fleet, to their army in Egypt and to their garrison in Malta. But their object being manifest, their proposal was declined. Lord Grenville

brought forward on this point a counter-project, as follows: "Malta and the maritime towns of Egypt shall be placed on the same footing as those places which, though comprised within the demarcation of the French army in Germany, are occupied by the Austrian troops. Consequently nothing shall be admitted by sea which can give additional means of defence; and provisions only for fourteen days at a time, calculated according to the consumption of the place."

We find Mr. Pitt in a private letter at this juncture argue strongly in favour of that counter-project, as compared to an absolute refusal—which the King would have preferred—of the French demands. Thus he wrote to the Chancellor at Weymouth.

"MY DEAR LORD, "Downing Street, Sept. 5, 1800.

. . . . . .

"The question is certainly a delicate one, as any naval armistice is now, and the benefits, as far as they go, are all on the side of France. But the absolute refusal of such a measure would, as I conceive, clearly produce the immediate renewal of hostilities between France and Austria, and probably drive the latter, after some fresh disaster, or from the apprehension of it, to an immediate separate peace on the worst terms. We should thereby not only lose the benefit of a joint negotiation, at which we have so long been aiming, but should also give up the present opportunity of negotiating for ourselves in a manner much more creditable and satisfactory than would result from any direct and separate overture which we might make at a later period. . . . . The season of the year itself, independent of the articles of the Convention, as we propose

them, and of the right of search which we retain, will render it impossible for them to procure any material supply of naval stores before the end of the year, and will therefore prevent their deriving that advantage which we should have most to apprehend. On the whole, I am persuaded that the inconvenience of the armistice, thus modified, would be much less than that of Austria being driven at the moment either to a separate peace or the renewal of hostilities; and that, if the modifications are rejected by France, we shall at least have shown that we have done all that in fairness was possible towards a general peace, shall stand completely justified to Austria, and shall carry the opinion and spirit of our own country with us in any measures which the continuance of the war on this ground (if such should be the result) may require. I wish W—— could have had time to have given notice to yourself and such of our colleagues as are at a distance; but the business has pressed so much to a day as to make it impossible.

"Ever, my dear Lord, &c.,

"W. PITT."

At this period both Mr. Pitt and Lord Grenville flattered themselves with the hopes of speedily commencing a joint negotiation for a peace. They had already fixed on their negotiator at the intended Congress of Luneville. The Foreign Secretary proposed his brother, Mr. Thomas Grenville, and the Prime Minister readily acceded to the choice of so able a man. But all such hopes were dashed by the answer from Paris to the English counter-project. The French could not deny the parity of reasoning which Lord Grenville's note established between the Austrian garrisons in Germany

and their own in the Mediterranean, but they insisted upon it "that the maritime truce should offer to the French Republic advantages equal to those secured to the House of Austria by the Continental truce." And finally, after many endeavours on both sides to effect an adjustment, the negotiation fell to the ground. Before its close, however, one at least of its objects was decided. The garrison of Malta, reduced to great extremities, surrendered to the English squadron early in September, after a blockade of two years.

It was impossible that this negotiation could proceed in London without bringing to light the tendencies of each individual Minister. And here a wide divergence came to be apparent. Mr. Dundas, with his usual practical good sense, drew up a "Statement of Views in the Cabinet," which he submitted to Mr. Pitt. This paper, still preserved at Melville Castle, bears the date of September 22, 1800.

"Some of us," says Mr. Dundas, "think that the only solid hope of peace lies in the restoration of the Bourbons.

"Some, without going so far, think that there should be no peace with a Revolutionary Government, and that the present Government of France is such.

"Some are for negotiating with the present Government of France, but only in conjunction with the Emperor of Germany.

"Some [it is clear that Mr. Dundas includes himself] are for negotiating on our own foundation singly, with a just sense of our dignity and honour, and of the conquests we have made out of Europe."

Mr. Dundas observes that these differences are not theoretical, but practical, presenting themselves in every discussion either on the prosecution of war or the prospect of peace.

The Statement thus concludes:

"It is earnestly hoped that Mr. Pitt will take these observations into his most serious consideration before it is too late."

From this Statement it certainly appears that Mr. Pitt might find it requisite to make some changes in the Cabinet before he could hope to renew the negotiation with effect.

Dundas had at this time, besides the public, a personal motive for desiring the conclusion of a peace. There is among the Pitt Papers a confidential letter from him dated April 14, 1800. In this letter he relates a conversation between himself and a member of his family who had with affectionate anxiety urged upon him some proofs of his failing health, and, above all, "that I had lost the talent of sound sleep, which was now always broken, and depending more or less on the current transactions of the day." In conclusion Mr. Dundas makes it his earnest request, "although I had promised, and should most certainly adhere to it, to remain, if necessary, in the War Department while the war lasted, yet that if at any period previous to that you see any opening for my retiring from it sooner, with your own perfect approbation, you will embrace it."

The division in the Cabinet on the question of peace or war was no doubt very painful to Mr. Pitt. Still more painful to him was the continued dearth of pro-

visions, and the effect which it was producing. In some parts of the country there was disturbance; in all there was distress. At the commencement of the harvest, when the rain was pouring in torrents, and when it was feared that the entire crop might be spoiled, the price of wheat rose even to the famine price of 120*s.* a quarter. Combined with these causes of disquietude to the Prime Minister, there was his own broken health, requiring at this time the frequent attendance of his physician and friend Sir Walter Farquhar. We find him, under the pressure of all these feelings, write as follows to his friend the Speaker:—

Mr. Pitt to Mr. Addington.

"Oct. 8, 1800.

. . . . . .

"After all, the question of peace or war is not in itself half so formidable as that of the scarcity with which it is necessarily combined, and for the evils and growing dangers of which I see no adequate remedy. These are uncomfortable speculations, and I am not the better for brooding over them during the confinement and anxiety of some weeks past. Sir Walter Farquhar even begins to threaten me with the necessity of a visit to Cheltenham or Bath, in order to be at all equal to the Session. How long that can be deferred is not quite ascertained.

"Ever affectionately yours,

"W. P."

Next day he writes again:—

"Downing Street, Oct. 9, 1800.

"Since I wrote to you yesterday, I have been reflecting further on an idea which many circumstances have suggested to me within these few days, and in my opi-

nion of the propriety of which I am very much confirmed. I see nothing so likely to prevent the progress of discontent and internal mischief as what we have more than once found effectual, and cannot too much accustom the public to look up to—a speedy meeting of Parliament. Even if no important legislative measure could be taken, the result of Parliamentary inquiry and discussion would go further than anything towards quieting men's minds, and checking erroneous opinions; while on the other hand if petitions for Parliament were to be spread generally (as I have little doubt they will) and were to be disregarded, a ground would be given for clamour, of which the disaffected would easily avail themselves for the worst purpose.

"Besides, I think in fact there are some measures which it would be of real advantage as well as useful in impression to take without delay—such as, particularly, the renewal of the measure of guaranteeing a given price to all corn and rice imported in the next twelve months, with a view particularly to the importation of rice from India, for which we have already given directions, through the Company, trusting to Parliament to make good the guaranty. The renewal of the prohibition to make starch, and perhaps the stoppage of the distilleries (though measures of less importance), may also be useful. Other provisions of a slower but more permanent operation may perhaps be devised for encouraging further the growth of corn; and I do not wholly despair that temperate discussion might gradually appease the indiscriminate clamour against some of the most necessary classes of dealers, and reconcile the public to confining the penalties of the law solely to *combinations*, which are always criminal, or at least to speculations which can be proved to be for the purpose of unduly and artificially raising the price. There seems at least

matter enough for some substantial proceeding not uncreditable to Parliament.

"With respect to the question of war and peace, I rather think good instead of harm would result from discussing it on the ground on which it is placed by our late correspondence. Pray let me know what you think of all these ideas. . . . We shall probably decide this question by a Cabinet to-morrow.

"Ever affectionately yours,

"W. P."

These letters were quickly followed by a visit of the writer to his friend at Woodley. On the 19th of October Mr. Addington writes to his brother Hiley:—"Pitt is now here. He is certainly better, but I am still very far from being at ease about him. Sir Walter Farquhar is to be here on Tuesday, and it will then be determined whether he is to remain here or proceed to Bath or Cheltenham. . . . He wants rest and consolation, and I trust he will find both here."

Again on the 26th to Hiley:—"Pitt, thank God, is recovered beyond my expectations, and greatly beyond those of Sir Walter Farquhar, who strongly advised his continuance in his present quarters. . . . He seems perfectly happy, and I must say that Woodley has never been more pleasant to myself."

And finally on the 5th of November:—"Pitt has just left us. He had been so long one of the family that the separation was very painful to all parties."[2] At this very time moreover Mr. Pitt gave a practical proof of his regard for his friend at Woodley by naming his brother Mr. Hiley Addington to a Lordship of the Treasury.

[2] Life of Lord Sidmouth, by Dean Pellew, vol. i. p. 266.

All through his stay at Woodley Pitt was intently watching the price of corn. Thus he writes to Mr. Rose October 25:—"The market here at Reading has been very abundant to-day (Saturday), and fallen 7*s.* per quarter, which I hope augurs well for the London market on Monday."

It is to be observed that on the questions relative to the price of corn, the opinions of Pitt and Grenville were by no means the same. Pitt held that on the primary article of the nation's food it might be justifiable and wise to depart in some measure from the strict principles of Adam Smith. He held that some regard should be had to the special circumstances of the country, and to the concurrent opinion at that time of all the parties concerned. He held that to encourage either the immediate importation of corn or its future growth among us for an adequate supply, some action of the Legislature might be properly required. Pitt therefore inclined to the principle of the Corn Laws as they have since been called. Grenville, on the contrary, maintained in the most absolute form and in the most peremptory language the doctrine of Free Trade. He had to yield his opinion in the Cabinet, but was only the more earnest in expressing it whenever he wrote to the Prime Minister. I subjoin his principal letter at this period:—

Lord Grenville to Mr. Pitt.

"My dear Pitt, "Dropmore, Oct. 24, 1800.

"Lord Buckingham's letter is nothing more than an exaggerated statement of my fixed and, I am sure,

immutable opinion on the subject of all laws for lowering the price of provisions, either directly *or by contrivance*. That opinion you know so well, that it is idle for me to trouble you with long discourses or long letters of mine about it. We in truth formed our opinions on the subject together, and I was not more convinced than you were of the soundness of Adam Smith's principles of political economy till Lord Liverpool lured you from our arms into all the mazes of the old system.

"I am confident that provisions, like every other article of commerce, if left to themselves, will and must find their level; and that every attempt to disturb that level by artificial contrivances has a necessary tendency to increase the evil it seeks to remedy.

"In all the discussions with which we are overwhelmed on this subject, one view of it is wholly overlooked. Every one takes it for granted that the present price of corn is in itself undue, and such as ought not to exist; and then they dispute whether it is to be ascribed to combinations, which they wish to remedy by such means as will destroy all commerce, or to an unusual scarcity which they propose to supply by obliging the grower to contend in the home market, not with the natural rivalship of such importation as the demand might and would produce of itself, but with an artificial supply poured in at the expense of I know not how many millions to the State.

"Both these parties assume that the price is undue—that is, I presume, that it is more than would be produced by the natural operation of demand and supply counteracting each other. Now I know no other standard of price than this. But if the price be really so much higher, as is supposed, what prevents the increase of the supply at home? Or what bounty could operate so effectually to increase the quantity of wheat produced in the

country, as the experience of the farmer teaching him that by the increased growth of that article he can make two or three times as great a profit as he can by any other?

"No man, with the least knowledge of the subject, will say that the country now produces all the wheat it could, if it answered to apply more capital to the produce. Give me my own price for it, and I will engage to produce more wheat in my kitchen garden than any farmer in this neighbourhood now does in his whole farm. But the wheat so produced will have cost so much in labour and manure, that unless it were sold at two or three times more than even the present price, I should receive no return for my capital—perhaps not even recover the capital itself.

"It never has been proved to me that the price of wheat in these last two years has been more than sufficient to afford a reasonable profit on the capital of the farmer who has produced it, considering the increased expense of every article which he must consume in producing it, and the very scanty crop of last year, which gave so much smaller a quantity, while it left the expense the same as before, or rather, indeed, much increased by some of the unfavourable circumstances of the season.

"It is for this reason that I detest and abhor as impious and heretical the whole system on which we are now acting on the subject.

. . . . . .

"As to tithes—when we begin to rob and confiscate, I imagine we shall not stop at corn-rents, nor will the *tithes* of the parish of Stowe be all that will fall a prey to that system.

"How can any man of sense who looks at this country, and sees what has been done in it the last hundred

years, pretend, or believe, that there exists in it an obstacle which will let no man employ capital in the improvement of land? Has no land been improved in that period? or how has it been improved but by the application of capital to it? The Chancellor's plan on that subject I look at with great satisfaction, because it increases instead of diminishing the power of the life-tenant over his own property; and though by this individuals sometimes lose, the public I am confident always gains by it.

"Considering that I began by saying that it was useless to trouble you with a long letter, I have not been very forbearing; but my mind is full of the subject, and I cannot restrain myself till the moment comes when I may vent myself upon it, and by endeavouring to convince all the world of their ignorance, satisfy them of my folly.

"Ever most affectionately yours,

"G."

The Cabinet meeting which Pitt in one of his letters mentions as close at hand, had decided that Parliament should be convened on the 11th of November. It met accordingly, the House of Commons in the Painted Chamber, whilst St. Stephen's was preparing for the reception of a hundred additional members under the Act of Union. The King, in his opening Speech, alleged the high price of provisions and the severe pressure upon the poorer classes as the motive why he had called Parliament together at an earlier period than was at first designed.

The question of remedial measures was at once referred to Select Committees of both Houses. The

Commons' Committee, which chose Mr. Ryder for Chairman, presented in succession no less than six Reports. They recommended that the King should be empowered to prohibit, by Orders in Council, the export of provisions. They recommended a bounty on certain articles of import. They recommended the prohibition for a limited time of corn in distilling of spirits, or in making of starch. They recommended the prohibition of any bread made solely from the fine flour of wheat. All these proposals, and some others, were passed into law with very slight discussion. Yet some might, perhaps, have been debated with advantage, and one especially (the Brown Bread Bill, as commonly called) was found so oppressive in practice as to be repealed almost at the very outset of the ensuing Session. "For my part," said Mr. Pitt, "I recognize the freedom of trade in its full extent; but I do not mean to deny that some regulation may be necessary in the present situation of the country."[3]

In the same discussion Mr. Pitt rebuked some popular prejudices of the time. There had been a loud cry against "forestallers and regraters." There had been in the month of July preceding a trial upon this subject in the Court of King's Bench. Mr. Rusby, an eminent cornfactor, was indicted for having purchased in Mark Lane ninety quarters of oats at 41*s.* per quarter, and sold thirty of them again on the same day and in the same market at 44*s.* The "heinous charge," being fully proved, the Jury brought in a verdict of Guilty: upon

[3] Parl. Hist., vol. xxxv. p. 793.

which the Chief Justice, Lord Kenyon, thus addressed them: "You have conferred by your verdict almost the greatest benefit that ever was conferred by any Jury!"[4]

The law laid down on this occasion did not altogether pass current. It was afterwards discussed in full Court, and the Judges being equally divided in opinion, the benefit of their doubts was allowed to Mr. Rusby. But when errors like these prevailed in high places, how could any half-educated multitude be free from them? At Coventry, for example, the same prejudice was entertained. Mr. Wilberforce Bird, who was one of the Members for that city, expressed the views of his constituents in the debate upon the First Report of the Select Committee. He said that they would desire far more effectual measures of relief. He said that being as they were under the grievous pressure of an artificial dearth, they would bitterly feel that the great evils to which alone it could be attributed, monopoly and extortion, were still to proceed without any check at all from Parliament.

Pitt rose at once to answer this gentleman. He complained that Mr. Bird had spoken rather in the spirit of a delegate obeying his orders than of a representative exerting his free judgment.

"There are, undoubtedly, occasions," he said, "on which gentlemen who represent large and populous places, instead of receiving instruction from their constituents, will find themselves enabled to convey to them much useful information, and to correct their

[4] Ann. Register, 1800, part ii. p. 23.

errors. I know, Sir, that in many populous places the spirit of Jacobinism, taking advantage of the pressure of hunger, as it does of everything, has, with unwearied activity, endeavoured to increase the mischief. I know, too, that there has been a disposition to inculcate the mischievous idea that it was in the power of Parliament to make every deficiency disappear — a deficiency arising principally from a succession of unfavourable seasons, whatever other causes may have contributed to it—and at once to produce abundance and cheapness. I know that many people, in suggesting remedies for the evil, have talked about a limitation of price, and have hinted at the propriety of establishing *a maximum price of corn.* Now, it is evident that populous places would be the first to feel the mischief arising from the adoption of so pernicious a doctrine. It is well known that large manufacturing districts do not grow a quantity of corn sufficient for the consumption of their numerous population; and it is equally clear that the adoption of such a measure would necessarily put an end to transportation of grain from places where the quantity grown is greater, and where the consumption is less."

In this Session, which was protracted till the last day of the year, the questions of the Scarcity, though the most important, were not the only ones discussed. There was a Bill carried through continuing the suspension of the Habeas Corpus. There was a motion by Mr. Sheridan relative to the late negotiation for a peace with France: it was defeated by 156 to 35. There was a motion by Mr. Tyrrwhitt Jones, which reflected on the

conduct of the English Government in the Convention of El Arish; it was defeated by 80 to 12. The same persevering gentleman also brought forward an Address for the dismissal of His Majesty's Ministers. Neither Pitt himself nor any of his colleagues deemed it necessary to say a word in reply; they maintained a disdainful silence, and left the motion to be disposed of in a thin House by 66 to 13.

In the months of November and December many titles were conferred. There was a batch of English Baronetcies, one of which, "Robert Peel, of Drayton Manor, in the county of Stafford," is memorable when viewed in the light of subsequent events. Sylvester Douglas, who had yielded his seat at the Treasury in favour of Hiley Addington, was raised to the Peerage as Lord Glenbervie, and also appointed Governor of the Cape of Good Hope. Lord Malmesbury, in just requital of his high diplomatic services, was made an Earl.

But it was in the sister country that such favours were cast about with a truly lavish hand. Already had the Dublin Gazette of July 30, 1800, announced sixteen creations or promotions in the Irish peerage. To these the Gazettes of December 27 and 30 added, surprising as it may appear, no less than twenty-six. Great efforts had been made to reduce these lists, and no small anxiety upon this point had been manifested by the King.[5] But it was necessary to fulfil with honour the engagements which, to carry through the Union, Lord Cornwallis had thought himself obliged to make.

[5] See the Cornwallis Correspondence, vol. iii. p. 257, &c.

At the close of this year Lord Chatham appears to have called the attention of Mr. Pitt to a special attack in the *True Briton*. What that attack may have been I cannot say. I applied at the British Museum to see the *True Briton* of the date in question, but I found that by some accident there is a blank in the series for that year. Here, at all events, is Mr. Pitt's reply:—

"Downing (Street), Tuesday,
"My dear Brother, Dec. 30 (1800), ½ past 2.

"I had not seen the *True Briton* till after I got your note. The only paragraph I have yet found does not seem one that can have much effect; but such as it is, it is impossible for it not to be very offensive to me. I shall certainly take the most effectual measures I can to check such a conduct, but you really do not know how little means there are to keep printers in order.

"Ever affectionately yours,
"W. Pitt."

To this last remark of Mr. Pitt I am tempted to add another, though of different date, of Lord Grenville. He writes to his brother, Lord Buckingham, as follows, December 27, 1809: "It has been my fate all through life to be more injured by the press in my favour than by that which has been pretty unsparingly employed against me."

Several Ministers besides Lord Grenville might have made the same observation.

During this early Session the news from the Continent was very far from auspicious. The French at the conclusion of the armistice had resumed hostilities with

vigour and success; and, although the First Consul remained at Paris for the conduct of the government, he could still, in some degree, direct the movement of the armies. In Italy the Neapolitans were defeated along the Tiber, and the Austrians compelled to fall back beyond the Mincio. In Bavaria General Moreau, who was opposed to the Archduke John, gained over him, on the 3rd of December, the brilliant victory of Hohenlinden. That battle, fought in the midst of snow, though won by French valour, is renowned in British verse:—

> "Wave, Munich, all thy banners wave,
> And charge with all thy chivalry!"

The Austrians had no alternative but to solicit another armistice and allow the principle of a separate negotiation. Conferences had already been opened in the town of Luneville. There Austria was represented by Count Cobentzel, and France by Joseph Bonaparte. The First Consul laid down as conditions from which he would not depart, the Rhine as the boundary of the French and the Adige as the boundary of the Cisalpine Republic.

From Petersburg also the tidings were not favourable to the cause of England. The Emperor Paul, among other fantastic notions, had conceived an idea that he was the rightful heir or head of the Knights of Malta. He had greatly resented the surrender of that island to the English. He had in a formal note made a demand for its transfer to himself, a demand which we as formally refused. Under these circum-

stances Paul, in a transport of anger, laid an embargo on all British ships in the ports of Russia, and actually seized above three hundred. But further still he undertook to urge against us once again the claims of Neutral Nations. In these he felt himself fortified by some recent cases at sea—the case of the Danish frigate the Freya, in July, and the case of the Swedish ketch, the Hoffnung, in September. Paul accordingly determined to renew the confederacy against England which had been formed by the Empress Catherine, in 1780, on the plea of Maritime Rights and under the name of an Armed Neutrality. With this view he invited a visit from the King of Sweden, and entered into negotiation with the Courts of Berlin and Copenhagen. The result was speedily apparent. On the 16th of December there was signed at Petersburg a Convention between Russia and Sweden, to which, in a few days, Denmark adhered. It reasserted in still stronger terms the principles of the Armed Neutrality, and expressed a readiness to maintain them, if necessary, by an appeal to arms.

This new confederacy was encountered by England with the same high spirit which she had shown in 1780 under still greater difficulties and still greater dangers. On the 14th of January, 1801, there was issued an Order in Council for an Embargo on all Russian, Swedish, or Danish vessels in the ports of the United Kingdom. At the same time Lord Grenville expressed his concern and his displeasure in a joint Note to the Danish and Swedish Envoys. "At the beginning," he said, "of the present war the Court of

Petersburg, which had taken a most active part in the establishment of the former alliance, entered into articles with His Majesty which are not merely incompatible with the Convention of 1780, but which are directly in the face of it; engagements which are still in force, and the reciprocal execution of which His Majesty is entitled to demand upon every principle of good faith during the continuance of the war."

In January, 1801, our Navy was perhaps not unequal to that of all the other European states. By sea we might probably against all gainsayers hold our own; but by land the prospect was certainly not encouraging. The sanguine hopes in the January preceding of a successful campaign against France had melted away into air. Austria had already succumbed to superior power, and Naples was prepared to follow in her train. Within a very few days the conclusion of a Peace at Luneville on the terms which the First Consul had dictated, and from which we were shut out, would leave us without a single ally of any value upon the Continent of Europe.

In the course of such unfavourable tidings and amidst such lowering prospects came on the first Meeting of the Imperial Parliament. On the 22nd of January, the first day of that Meeting, Mr. Addington was unanimously elected to the Chair, and several of the following days were employed in swearing in the Members. It was not till the 2nd of February that the King opened the Session in a Speech from the Throne. "The unfortunate course of events" in the

war with France, and "the acts of injustice and violence" of the Court of Petersburg, together with the new attempt of that Court in conjunction with those of Copenhagen and Stockholm "for establishing by force a new code of maritime law," were dwelt on by His Majesty. But thus continued the King: "You may rely on my availing myself of the earliest opportunity which shall afford a prospect of terminating the present contest on grounds consistent with our security and honour. . . . . It will afford me the truest and most heartfelt satisfaction whenever the disposition of our enemies shall enable me thus to restore to the subjects of my United Kingdom the blessings of Peace."

The terms of the Royal Speech, as framed by Mr. Pitt, were, as usual, embodied in a counter-Address from both Houses. In the Lords the Address was moved by the Duke of Montrose. Earl Fitzwilliam proposed an Amendment of a party character, alleging the waste of the public resources "either by improvident and ineffectual projects or by general negligence and profusion." But this Amendment was rejected by 73 votes against 17.

In the Commons the same Amendment was moved. Mr. Grey, in Fox's absence, brought it forward, in a long and eloquent speech. On the Northern Confederacy he descanted in some detail. He was not clear that we were really entitled to the Maritime Rights which we claimed, and he was convinced that even the loss of them would not produce such very serious results. Mr. Pitt rose at once to reply: "In following, Sir," he said, "the order which the Hon. gentleman has taken, I

must begin with his doubts and end with his certainties; and I cannot avoid observing that he was singularly unfortunate upon this subject, for he entertained doubts where there was not the slightest ground for hesitation, and he makes up his mind with absolute certainty upon points in which both arguments and facts are decidedly against him. That part of the subject upon which the Hon. gentleman appears to be involved in doubt is with respect to the justice of our claim in regard to neutral vessels. . . . . Sir, the Hon. gentleman doubts that which has been the acknowledged principle of law in all the tribunals of the kingdom, which are alone competent to decide upon the subject, and which principle Parliament has constantly known them to act upon. I ask whether that principle has not been maintained in every war? Let me also ask whether, in the course of the speeches of the gentlemen on the other side of the House, ever since the present war began, any one topic of alarm has been omitted which either fact could furnish or ingenuity supply? I believe I shall not be answered in the negative; and yet I believe I may safely assert that it never occurred to any one Member to increase the difficulties of the country by stating a doubt upon the question of Right; and it will be a most singular circumstance that the Hon. gentleman and his friends should only have begun to doubt when our enemies are ready to begin to combat. . . . . But the case does not stop here. What will the Hon. gentleman say if I show him that in the course of the present war both Denmark and Sweden have distinctly expressed their readiness to agree in that very prin-

ciple against which they are disposed to contend, and that they made acknowledgments to us for not carrying the claim so far as Russia was disposed to carry it? What will the Hon. gentleman say if I show him that Sweden, who in 1780 agreed to the armed neutrality, has since then been at war herself, and then acted upon a principle directly contrary to that which she agreed to in 1780, and to that upon which she is now disposed to act? In the war between Sweden and Russia, the former distinctly acted upon that very principle for which we are now contending. What will the Hon. gentleman say if I show him that in the last autumn Denmark, with her fleets and arsenals at our mercy, entered into a solemn pledge not again to send vessels with convoy until the principle was settled; and that, notwithstanding this solemn pledge, this state has entered into a new convention, similar to that which was agreed to in 1780?

"Sir, I come now to the question of expediency, and upon this part of the subject the Hon. gentleman is not so much in doubt. The question is, whether we are to permit the navy of our enemy to be supplied and recruited—whether we are to suffer blockaded forts to be furnished with warlike stores and provisions—whether we are to suffer neutral nations, by hoisting a flag upon a sloop or a fishing-boat, to convey the treasures of South America to the harbours of Spain, or the naval stores of the Baltic to Brest or Toulon? Are these the propositions which gentlemen mean to contend for?

"The Hon. gentleman talks of the destruction of the

naval power of France; but does he really believe that her marine would have been decreased to the degree that it now is if during the whole of the war this very principle had not been acted upon? And, if the commerce of France had not been destroyed, does he believe that, if the fraudulent system of neutrals had not been prevented, her navy would not have been in a very different situation from that in which it now is? Does he not know that the naval preponderance which we have by these means acquired has given security to this country, and has more than once afforded chances for the salvation of Europe? In the wreck of the Continent, and the disappointment of our hopes there, what has been the security of this country but its naval preponderance?—and if that were once gone, the spirit of the country would go with it."

The speech of Mr. Pitt that night seems to have displayed in full perfection what Coleridge, in describing his style, once called "the proud architectural pile of his sentences." Delivered with his usual force and fire, it produced a strong impression on the House. With all the efforts of Grey, Tierney, and Sheridan, the Amendment was rejected by 245 votes against 63. Never had the Ministerial phalanx appeared more numerous or compact. Never did the Minister, in spite of all foreign dangers or alarms, seem to stand more firmly fixed at home. Yet even then there were public rumours of a change. Yet on that very night Mr. Pitt was virtually, and by his own act, out of office, and his powerful administration of seventeen years was in fact already dissolved.

The cause was the Roman Catholic question—the question which then and for thirty years to come was the main obstacle to lasting governments and united parties in England. I have already shown with how much vehemence, in February, 1795, the King had expressed to his Ministers his determination to maintain the Test Act. Not satisfied with the recall of Lord Fitzwilliam, and apprehending a renewal of the question at some future time, His Majesty, about a month later, wrote to consult Lord Kenyon. The King had doubts whether his consent to repeal the Test Act would be consistent with the due observance of his Coronation Oath. On this point he desired Lord Kenyon to obtain the opinion also of the Attorney-General. Lord Kenyon and Sir John Scott, like the honourable men they were, did not permit either any bias of their politics or any hopes of their promotion to bias their legal and constitutional views. On the 11th of March, 1795, they thus replied: "Though the Test Act appears to be a very wise law, and in point of sound policy not to be departed from, yet it seems that it might be repealed or altered without any breach of the Coronation Oath or Act of Union (with Scotland)."[6]

The conclusion of Lord Kenyon and Sir John Scott, as given in this letter, appears of unanswerable force. I am far from denying, although I was not convinced by them, that there were several weighty arguments to allege

[6] See p. 14 of the Correspondence published in 1827 by Dr. Philpotts, afterwards Bishop of Exeter. Exactly to the same effect in the view of the Coronation Oath are the powerful remarks of Lord Macaulay (Hist. of England, vol. iii. p. 117).

against the Roman Catholic claims. But most certainly the supposed breach of the Coronation Oath is not to be numbered among these. It has been long since, and almost by common consent, abandoned as untenable.

Unhappily, however, the King at the same time, but separately from the other two, consulted the Chancellor Loughborough. Even the warm admirers (if there be any such) of his Lordship's political career will scarcely ascribe to him any very ardent zeal on the abstract merits of the question. Through his whole life his political principles hung most loosely upon him; he had more than once changed them on a sudden, and from the lure of personal advantage. Of his first turn in 1771, one of his successors on the Woolsack writes: "This must be confessed to be one of the most flagrant cases of *ratting* recorded in our party annals."[7]

In 1795 Lord Loughborough was most anxious to gratify and find favour with his Royal Master. He sent the King a written opinion stating that the Royal assent to the repeal of the Test Act might be held by implication to violate the Coronation Oath. But he appears to have carefully concealed the communication from his colleagues. It was only some years later, and after the fall of Mr. Pitt's Ministry, that we find him give an account of the affair in conversation with Mr. Rose. It is painful to add, that the statement of his written opinion, as Mr. Rose reports that statement in his Diary, is utterly and irreconcileably at variance with the written opinion itself which Lord Campbell has pub-

[7] Lord Campbell's Lives of the Chancellors, vol. vi. p. 87.

lished from the original draft in Lord Loughborough's own handwriting.[8]

The further progress of this question, as it bears on the Union with Ireland, is most clearly to be traced in a remarkable letter which Lord Castlereagh addressed to Mr. Pitt, recapitulating for his final decision the steps which had recently passed. It is dated the 1st of January, 1801, and is published both in the Castlereagh and in the Cornwallis Correspondence. Lord Castlereagh states that when in England during the autumn of 1799, he was requested to attend the meetings of the Cabinet upon the Catholic question. He did attend them accordingly. He heard no difference of opinion as to the merits of the question itself. On these the Ministers seemed to him unanimous; but he found "that some doubts were entertained as to the possibility of admitting Catholics into some of the higher offices, and that Ministers apprehended considerable repugnance to the measure in many quarters, and particularly in *the highest*."

On the whole Lord Castlereagh was at that time empowered to write to the Lord Lieutenant that so far as the sentiments of the Cabinet were concerned, his Excellency need not hesitate in calling forth the Catholic support to the projected Union. Upon this principle, then, did Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh act in Ireland. They refrained, as did also Mr. Pitt in England, from any kind of pledge, or promise, or assurance to the Roman Catholic leaders. But undoubtedly a general hope was raised, and from that

[8] Compare Lord Campbell's Chancellors, vol. vi. p. 297, with Mr. Rose's Diaries, vol. i. p. 300.

hope a general co-operation was afforded. The Roman Catholics, as a whole, either remained neutral or gave their support to the Union. It seems to be admitted that had their support been withheld, and their weight been thrown into the opposite scale, the measure could not at that time have been carried.

It will, therefore, be seen that when the measure became law in July, 1800, there was no engagement to redeem with the Roman Catholics in Ireland. But I think it must be owned that they had a moral claim upon the Government in England. So at least thought Mr. Pitt. He decided that their state, and the change that might be made in the laws affecting them, should be laid before the Cabinet on its reassembling after the summer recess; and he summoned Lord Castlereagh from Dublin to attend the Cabinet meetings on this subject as he had the year before.

It so chanced that in the early autumn the King had gone to pass some weeks at Weymouth for the benefit of his health. There he was joined by the Chancellor, who at first had intended to remain only a few days, but who, to ingratiate himself with his Royal Master, prolonged his stay. Until then he may have thought, as having heard no more of them, that the feelings of George the Third upon the Catholic question had cooled and subsided since 1795. But he soon discovered that they were as warm as ever in the Royal breast. He determined to do his utmost in private to strengthen and confirm them, and to stand forth in public as their mouth-piece and assertor.

It may be asked what motive could sway this versa-

tile politician at that juncture. Some men may, if they think fit, ascribe to him a devout and irrepressible zeal for Protestant ascendency; others may believe that he was secretly aiming at the highest object of political ambition, and designing to make himself Prime Minister on the ruins of Mr. Pitt, and with the aid of some deputy in the House of Commons.

In his political movements at this time we may conjecture that Lord Loughborough did not stand alone. He was in the closest intimacy with his relative and friend Lord Auckland. Since 1798 Lord Auckland had held a lucrative office in the Home Government as joint Post-Master General. While filling that post he appears to have chafed at his exclusion from the Cabinet. He saw men far below him in accomplishments above him in position. I am convinced that he did not desire the actual downfall of Mr. Pitt, with whom he had lived in such familiar friendship; but he might seek to enhance his own importance, and to gain a higher post in the same administration.

If, as Lord Malmesbury states, and as seems probable, Lord Auckland did take some part, for whatever reason, with Lord Loughborough, he may have brought him a co-operation even more important than his own. He was brother-in-law of Dr. Moore, the Archbishop of Canterbury. Certain it is that in the course of this autumn the Archbishop received from some quarter a private hint that a Roman Catholic Relief Bill was in contemplation, and addressed a letter to the King, at Weymouth, strongly deprecating any such design. It is said that, before the close of the year, there came

also a similar representation to His Majesty from the Primate of Ireland: this was the Hon. Dr. William Stuart, who was appointed only in November of this year, and who was a younger son of the former favourite, the Earl of Bute.

It was at this period, and at the outset of these designs, that Mr. Pitt, writing in the honourable confidence of one colleague to another, addressed the following letter to Lord Loughborough at Weymouth.

"MY DEAR LORD, "Sept. 25, 1800.

"There are two or three very important questions relative to Ireland, on which it is very material that Lord Castlereagh should be furnished with at least the outline of the sentiments of the Cabinet. As he is desirous not to delay his return much longer, we have fixed next Tuesday for the Cabinet on this subject; and though I am very sorry to propose anything to shorten your stay at Weymouth, I cannot help being very anxious that we should have the benefit of your presence. The chief points, besides the great question on the general state of the Catholics, relate to some arrangement about tithes, and a provision for the Catholic and Dissenting Clergy. Lord Castlereagh has drawn up several papers on this subject, which are at present in Lord Grenville's possession, and which you will probably receive from him by the post.

"Ever, my dear Lord, &c.,

"W. PITT."

Mr. Pitt did not intend as yet to submit his project to the King. It is, I apprehend, the usual and customary course that a measure should not be laid before the Sovereign until it has been matured and perfected

in consultation between the members of the Cabinet. At all events it is quite certain that any previous communication should be made by and through the First Minister of the Crown. But the receipt of these papers from London gave Lord Loughborough a favourable opening for his own designs. How tempting to betray the Prime Minister, and in due time trip him up! How tempting to possess himself of the King's private ear, and become the regulator of his public conduct! With such views the Chancellor showed His Majesty the confidential letter from Mr. Pitt, thereby raising great anxiety and great displeasure in the Royal breast. That he did thus show the letter at Weymouth is acknowledged by himself in a long paper of explanation which in the spring of the ensuing year, when some rumours of his conduct began to be afloat, he found it requisite to draw up and to circulate among his friends. The original paper still remains among the Rosslyn manuscripts, and it has been published by Lord Campbell. "I abstain," says Lord Campbell at its close, "from the invidious task of commenting on this document."[9] Seldom indeed has any document so discreditable proceeded from any public man.

Lord Loughborough having now, as he hoped, secured a strong position with the King, set off for London, and attended the Cabinet to which he had been summoned on the 30th of September. There Mr. Pitt unfolded the entire design which, in conjunction with Lord Grenville, he had most carefully prepared. "We had formed a

[9] Lives of the Chancellors, vol. vi. p. 326.

plan"—so writes Lord Grenville a few months afterwards—"of an extensive arrangement of this whole subject, in which we included the measure of substituting in lieu of the Sacramental test, now notoriously evaded and insufficient for any effectual purpose, a political test, to be imposed indiscriminately on all persons sitting in Parliament, or holding State or Corporation offices, and also on all ministers of religion, of whatever description, and all teachers of schools, &c. This test was to be directly levelled against the Jacobin principles; was to disclaim in express terms the sovereignty of the people; and was to contain an oath of allegiance and fidelity to the King's government of the realm, and to the established constitution both in Church and State. All this was to have been accompanied with measures—the outlines of which I had before communicated to you—for strengthening the powers, and enforcing the discipline of our Church establishment over its own ministers; and for augmenting the income of those whose poverty now forms an insuperable bar to their residence. And a provision was also to be made in respect of tithes, which would, I think, materially operate in this country, and still more materially in Ireland, to remove the objections to that mode of provision for the clergy."[1]

The plan being thus explained and laid before the Cabinet, Lord Loughborough at once stood forth as its opponent—perhaps a little to the surprise of his colleagues, who remembered his acquiescence in the pre-

[1] Lord Grenville to Lord Buckingham, Feb. 2, 1801: Courts and Cabinets of George III., vol. iii. p. 129.

ceding year. He was willing to commute the tithes, for which indeed, as he said, he was already preparing a measure with the assistance of one of the Judges, but he must maintain the entire exclusion of the Catholics from Parliament and office. Under these untoward circumstances the Cabinet broke up without any decisive resolution. Mr. Pitt adjourned the question for two or three months, hoping then to allay the Chancellor's objections, and meanwhile requesting him to mature his measure upon tithes. Lord Castlereagh was instructed to return to Dublin and tell the Lord Lieutenant what had passed. "I apprised his Excellency," he says, "that sentiments unfavourable to the concession had been expressed by the highest law authority, and that the Cabinet at large did not feel themselves enabled in His Majesty's absence, and without sounding opinions in other quarters, to take a final decision on so momentous a question."[2]

During the interval which ensued the Chancellor was not inactive. He drew up and sent to the King at Windsor about the middle of December an able Essay, strongly urging the most popular objections to the Roman Catholic claims. The King subsequently gave this paper to Mr. Addington, and it has been printed by Dean Pellew.[3]

It might have been better for the great public interests involved if Mr. Pitt, in the course of this autumn, had freely opened his mind to his Royal Master. It

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[2] Letter to Mr. Pitt, January 1, 1801.

[3] Life of Lord Sidmouth, vol. i. p. 500-512.

might have been better to meet at once, rather than procrastinate, the main obstacle before him. The absence of the King from London, and his own depression of health and spirits, may have been perhaps among the causes that withheld him. But on the other hand, he had no reason to suspect the treachery of one of his colleagues, and he had known many cases in which the King's aversion, however strong, and however strongly expressed, had been at the last surmounted. Of this three especial instances may be alleged from their past correspondence: first, the dismissal of Lord Thurlow from office; secondly, the recall of the Duke of York from Flanders; and thirdly, the negotiation of Lord Malmesbury for peace with France. On all three points His Majesty had shown not only aversion, but even anguish of mind; yet on all three he had yielded to the firm though respectful representation of Mr. Pitt, made in writing and supported by the other members of the Cabinet.

It is highly probable that on the Catholic claims George the Third would have yielded too, had he thought them, like the other, only a political question, and had not the dread of violating his Coronation Oath been recently instilled into his mind. With that conviction, chimæra though it was, implanted, we can scarcely blame him for resistance at all risks. We can scarcely blame any man for desiring to confront any danger rather than incur the guilt of perjury.

Such then was the state of the question in January, 1801, when the Cabinet resumed its sittings, and when Lord Castlereagh came back from Ireland. He addressed to Mr. Pitt, as I have already stated, an import-

ant letter recapitulating all the previous steps that had been taken. In reply he must have been authorized to assure the Lord Lieutenant that Mr. Pitt would abide by his own opinion; for a few days afterwards we find Lord Cornwallis write to Lord Castlereagh in the following terms:—"Your letter, dated the 7th, afforded me very sincere satisfaction. If Mr. Pitt is firm, he will meet with no difficulty."[4] So ill had Lord Cornwallis, a man of but moderate abilities, informed himself! For it is certain that even if the Cabinet had been unanimous, and even if the King had yielded, there would still have been many and not slight difficulties to surmount, from the warm opposition of the two Primates and of their brother Bishops, and from the repugnance, even though as yet inactive, of a large portion of the British people.

Meanwhile the Cabinet was pursuing its deliberations. The Chancellor maintained his ground with more zeal than ever. Lord Westmorland, who had never been friendly to the Roman Catholics, but who had acquiesced in 1799, now stood forth at the Chancellor's side. The Duke of Portland had changed his opinion, and was inclining, though gently, against the Catholic cause. Lord Liverpool was absent, but declared his opposition by letter. Lord Chatham was also absent, but was understood to be also adverse. The other members of the Cabinet concurred with Mr. Pitt.

The discussions still at intervals continued, though with less and less prospect of agreement, when the

[4] Cornwallis Correspondence, vol. iii. p. 331.

anxiety of the King brought the matter to an issue. At his Levee on Wednesday, the 28th of January, the King walked up to Mr. Dundas, and eagerly asked him, as referring to Lord Castlereagh, "What is it that this young Lord has brought over which they are going to throw at my head? . . . . . The most Jacobinical thing I ever heard of! I shall reckon any man my personal enemy who proposes any such measure." "Your Majesty will find," answered Mr. Dundas, "among those who are friendly to that measure some whom you never supposed to be your enemies." [5]

During this conversation at the Levee several other persons stood partly within hearing, and some public rumours of course ensued.

Next day the King, in great distress of mind, wrote to the Speaker. "I know," he said, "we think alike on this great subject. I wish Mr. Addington would from himself open Mr. Pitt's eyes to the danger . . . . which may prevent his ever speaking to me on a subject upon which I can scarcely keep my temper." [6] Mr. Addington therefore did call upon Pitt, and was not without some hopes of having produced an impression on his friend. He wrote accordingly in answer to the Royal letter, and he had afterwards an interview with the King at Buckingham House. The part of the Prime Minister was, however, already taken. After the public and vehement language which the King had so recently used, Pitt had little or no hope of prevailing with His

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[5] Life of Wilberforce, by his Sons, vol. iii. p. 7.

[6] Life of Lord Sidmouth, by Dean Pellew, vol. i. p. 286.

Majesty.[7] But he thought his own course of duty clear before him. On the evening of Saturday, the 31st of January, Mr. Pitt addressed a letter to the King, containing a masterly argument on the question at issue, and asking leave to resign if he were not allowed to bring it forward with the whole weight of Government. The King received this letter on the morning of Sunday, the 1st of February, and, after consulting with the Speaker, wrote his reply before the close of the same day. "I shall hope," so says the King, "Mr. Pitt's sense of duty will prevent his retiring from his present situation to the end of my life;" and he proposed as a compromise that he, the King, should maintain henceforth utter silence on the question, and that Mr. Pitt on his part should forbear to bring it forward. "But," adds the letter, "further I cannot go."

In his rejoinder, dated the 3rd of the same month, Mr. Pitt declared himself unable to continue Minister upon these terms; and the King then wrote again on the 5th, accepting with grief, but from a sense of duty, the proffered resignation. These four letters were shortly afterwards shown by George the Third to Lord Kenyon, and his Lordship was at the same time permitted to transcribe them. From that copy the letters were first published in 1827 by Dr. Henry Philpotts, subsequently Bishop of Exeter. They will be found reprinted at the close of my present volume.[1]

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[7] See on this point the letter of Lord Grenville to his brother, dated Feb. 2, 1801, when, as he mentions, the King's answer was not yet received.

Thus abruptly ended Pitt's renowned administration of more than seventeen years. It ended, as will be noticed, without a single conference between the Monarch and the Minister. None, indeed, was requisite, since opinions were well understood to be fixed on either side.

The King at once summoned the Speaker and desired him to form a new administration. Mr. Addington wavered, and went to consult Mr. Pitt. Pitt had been no party to the King's proposal; but when consulted by his friend, he warmly counselled his acceptance. He assured him of his own cordial and decided support, and as Lord Sidmouth at a later time was wont to relate, he used these very words: "I see nothing but ruin, Addington, if you hesitate."[8] Thus encouraged, the Speaker undertook the arduous task.

It was well understood that the members of the Cabinet who had agreed with Mr. Pitt would retire with him. So would also Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh. "But"—so writes Wilberforce at this time—"of the younger or inferior in office as many continue as Mr. Pitt can prevail to stay in. He has acted most magnanimously and patriotically."[9]

In the same spirit Mr. Pitt was anxious that the ties of kindred and affection might not weigh with his brother to resign. On the 5th he wrote at length to Lord Chatham, who was still absent from town; explained to him fully all the circumstances of the

[8] From "Family Recollections" in the Life of Lord Sidmouth, by Dean Pellew, vol. i. p. 288.

[9] Letter to Lord Muncaster, Feb. 7, 1801.

case, and entreated him to continue in office. He showed this letter to Mr. Rose, and it must have been of considerable interest; but it is no longer to be found among his papers.

Here is the letter which Mr. Pitt wrote to Rose on this occasion:—

"Downing Street, Thursday,
"DEAR ROSE, Feb. 5, 1801, ¼ past 4.

"I have been occupied till this moment, and on sending found you were gone to the House. I should be very glad to see you any time in the evening; but as what I wish is to communicate to you some papers which I also want to send to my brother by a messenger to-day, I think the shortest way is to enclose them to you in the mean time, and beg you to return them as soon as you have read them. You will recollect what I said to you some days since on the Catholic question, though you will hardly have expected so rapid a result. As I wish you to know at once the whole of my real sentiments, I have thought it best to enclose with the other papers the letter which I have but just had time to finish, and am going to send with them to my brother.

"Ever sincerely yours,
"W. PITT.

"Take care not to read these papers where anybody can overlook you. Dundas dines with me, but I shall be at leisure any time in the evening."

Mr. Pitt, it appears, had not consulted the Bishop of Lincoln on this weighty matter; and notwithstanding their ties of close friendship, they did not concur upon it. I subjoin the letter which the Bishop at this time addressed to Mr. Rose:—

"MY DEAR SIR, "Buckden Palace, Feb. 6, 1801.

"I hear, and I think from good authority, that something very unpleasant is passing relative to a Roman Catholic Bill, which Government stands pledged to Ireland to introduce into the Imperial Parliament, and which is said to be disapproved by a Great Personage to such a degree that very unpleasant consequences indeed may follow. If what I hear concerning the intended measure be correct, I cannot but most earnestly deprecate it, and I am satisfied that it never can be carried through the House of Lords. I think that every Bishop would be against it: it has already excited no small alarm amongst some of our Bench. I am unwilling to write to Mr. Pitt about it, and you will judge whether it be expedient for you to mention to him what I have said.

. . . . . .

"Yours ever most truly,

"G. LINCOLN."

Rumours of the change had been floating for some days. On the 7th of February they were fully confirmed and acknowledged. In the City the first feeling was that of great alarm. Mr. Rose states in his Diary of that date: "Late at night (half-past eleven) Mr. Goldsmid came to tell me that on the account of Mr. Pitt's resignation being heard in the City, great confusion followed —a fall of five per cent. in the funds, and no market for Exchequer Bills. As this appeared, in the course of the conversation with Mr. Goldsmid, to have arisen in a great degree from an apprehension that Mr. Pitt was going out of office instantly, I thought it expedient to say to him that there was no intention of that sort, and

that Mr. Pitt would certainly open the Budget, and provide completely for the ways and means of the year, before he quitted his situation, which Mr. Goldsmid seemed to think would quiet people's minds sufficiently for the purpose in view."

Next morning, however, it occurred to Mr. Rose that his last communication to Mr. Goldsmid ought to be conveyed in a more authentic form. With Mr. Pitt's approval it was announced at the Stock Exchange, through Mr. Thornton, Governor of the Bank of England; and on this assurance, adds Mr. Rose, "Stocks fell one quarter per cent. only." Indeed, it seems probable that in the first alarm Mr. Goldsmid may have expressed himself with much exaggeration. I do not believe that, unless in some private transactions, the Stocks had fallen five per cent. on the preceding day. The List of Prices of Stock for 1801, as printed in the Annual Register, shows that the fluctuation in the Three per Cent. Consols during the entire month of February was but from 57 to 55⅛.

Among statesmen the opinions were of course very much divided. "If the Speaker is employed, as is said, to make a new arrangement, it must be indeed a notorious juggle." So, from St. Ann's Hill, wrote Fox on the 8th; for Fox, though most kind and generous to his political or private friends, seldom in his correspondence shows any candour to his adversaries. Other statesmen thought the new arrangement very frail and unpromising. That such was the opinion of Mr. Dundas appears from a letter which at this time he addressed to Mr. Pitt. It bears date "Wimbledon, Feb. 7, 1801,"

and begins, "I know not to what stage the Speaker's endeavours to form an arrangement have proceeded, but it is impossible for me not to whisper into your ear my conviction that no arrangement can be formed under him as its head that will not crumble to pieces almost as soon as formed. Our friends who, as an act of friendship and attachment to you, agree to remain in office, do it with the utmost chagrin and unwillingness; and, among the other considerations which operate upon them, is the feeling that they are embarking in an administration under a head totally incapable to carry it on."

CHAPTER XXX.

1801.

Lord Grenville announces the resignation of Ministers — Sir John Mitford chosen Speaker — Speech of Sheridan, and Pitt's reply — Pitt's Budget — Pitt endeavours to allay the disappointment of the Catholics — The new Cabinet — His Majesty's illness — The Doctors Willis consulted — Stir among politicians — Discussion in the House of Commons — Crisis in the King's disorder — Fox's concert of measures with his friends — The King's convalescence — Pitt's determination never again to mopt the Catholic Question during the King's reign — Pitt has an interview with the King, and gives up the Exchequer Seal — He leaves Downing Street — His friends in retirement: Mr. Rose — Mr. Canning — Lord Eldon — Lord Mulgrave — Lord Wellesley.

FEW things in our history are perhaps more to be lamented than the inflexible determination of the King in February, 1801, against the Roman Catholic claims. Even the adversaries on principle of those claims would probably in the present day partake in that regret. They would argue that the concession should not have been made at all, but they would allow that, if made, it would have been attended with much greater benefit, or with many fewer evils, in 1801 than it was in 1829. How fierce and long was the intervening conflict! How much of rancour and ill-will—and not on one side only, but on both—did that conflict leave behind!

It is true, indeed, that even in 1801 there would have been a resolute resistance to the measure—a resistance headed by the Primate in England and by the Primate in Ireland. But I think it certain that, had

the King been favourable, or even remained neutral, the measure would have passed, not easily indeed, but still by a large majority. The feelings of the English people had not then been stirred to any considerable extent against it. There had been none of that violent conduct and violent language on the part of Roman Catholics which at a later period provoked so much resentment upon the other side. In 1801 it would have been a compromise between parties; in 1829 it was a struggle and a victory of one party above the other. And, further still, the measure that was carried by the Duke of Wellington was far less comprehensive than the one proposed by Mr. Pitt. It did not comprise any settlement of the Roman Catholic clergy, a settlement which in 1801 might have been most advantageous, and which thirty years later became not only disadvantageous, but impossible.

But let me now revert to the events which immediately followed the resignation of Pitt. In Parliament the great change impending was at first understood and implied, rather than expressed. Pitt and Dundas had ceased to attend the House of Commons, and on the 9th Lord Hawkesbury requested Mr. Sturt, on account of their absence, to postpone a motion on the expedition to Ferrol. Mr. Sturt at first demurred. "I hope he will consent," said Mr. Ryder. "My Right Hon. friends have no desire to avoid the subject. Their absence proceeds from circumstances which it is impossible for me now to state, though those circumstances are almost notorious."

It is not very easy to discern the advantage of this

formal reserve; and next day, the 9th, Lord Grenville announced the resignation in due form to the House of Lords. "May we hope," he said, "that our services have contributed to the escape which this country has made from the evils that threatened it? It is our consolation to reflect that the same vigorous line of conduct will be pursued by our successors. Though we may differ from them in some points, in most there is no difference between us; and while they continue to act in a firm, resolute, and manly manner, they shall have our steady support."

The most pressing question for Mr. Addington was to find a successor to himself as Speaker, so as to enable the business of the Commons to proceed. He tendered the post to the Attorney-General, Sir John Mitford, by whom it was accepted. On the 11th, therefore, Sir John was proposed; with very little opposition chosen; and, after the usual coy demur, conducted to the Chair.

On the 16th, when Mr. Pitt was present, a Vote of Thanks to the late Speaker was moved; and there followed a discussion on the impending Ministerial changes. Pitt spoke four times that day. To Addington he referred in the kindest terms: "The Right Hon. gentleman," he said, "has already filled one situation of great importance with the most distinguished ability, and this is the surest augur of his services in another exalted situation."

The principal adversary on this occasion of the Ministers — both the old and the new — was Mr. Sheridan. He referred to Mr. Pitt as follows:

"The Right Hon. gentleman took great pride to himself for the assistance which he was about to lend to his successors in office. It was triumphantly asked, whether our allies and the people would not look for the same degree of vigour and ability from the new administration, standing on the same ground and fighting the same battle? He must certainly reply in the negative. When the two Right Hon. gentlemen (Pitt and Dundas) and a noble Earl (Spencer) should be removed, there would certainly be a great defalcation from the vigour and abilities of the Cabinet. The reasoning on this occasion was of a singular description. When the crew of a vessel was preparing for action, it was usual to clear the decks by throwing overboard the lumber, but he never heard of such a manœuvre as that of throwing their great guns overboard. When an Election Committee was formed, the watchword was to shorten the business by knocking out the brains of the Committee. This was done by striking from the list the names of the lawyers and other gentlemen who might happen to know a little too much of the subject. In this sense the Right Hon. gentlemen had literally knocked out the brains of the administration, and then, clapping a mask on the skeleton, cried, 'Here is as fine vigour and talent for you as anybody may wish to see.' This empty skull, this skeleton administration, was the phantom that was to overawe our enemies and to command the confidence of the House and the people."

Here is Mr. Pitt's reply:

"I have been accused of having refused to give the House any explanation upon the subject of my resignation. Sir, I did not decline giving the House an explanation upon that subject; but I must be permitted to observe that it appears to me to be a new and not a very constitutional doctrine that a man must not follow his sense of duty—that a man must not, in compliance with the dictates of his conscience, retire from office without being bound to give to this House and to the public an account of all the circumstances that weigh in his mind and influence his conduct. Where this system of duty is established I know not. I have never heard that it was a public crime to retire from office without explaining the reason: I, therefore, am not aware how it can be a public crime in me to relinquish, without assigning the cause, a station which it would be the ambition of my life and the passion of my heart to continue to fill if I could do so with advantage to the country and consistently with what I conceive to be my duty. As to the merits of the question which led to my resignation, though I do not feel myself bound, I am willing to submit them to the House. I should rather leave it to posterity to judge of my conduct—still, I have no objection to state the fact. With respect to the resignation of myself and of some of my friends, I have no wish to disguise from the House that we did feel it an incumbent duty upon us to propose a measure on the part of Government which, under the circumstances of the union so happily effected between the two countries, we thought of great public

importance and necessary to complete the benefits likely to result from that measure: we felt this opinion so strongly that, when we met with circumstances which rendered it impossible for us to propose it as a measure of Government, we equally felt it inconsistent with our duty and our honour any longer to remain a part of that Government. What may be the opinion of others I know not, but I beg to have it understood to be a measure which, if I had remained in Government, I must have proposed. What my conduct will be in a different situation must be regulated by a mature and impartial review of all the circumstances of the case. I shall be governed (as it has always been the wish of my life to be) only by such considerations as I think best tend to ensure the tranquillity, the strength, and the happiness of the empire."

Two days later—that is, on the 18th of February—Pitt, according to his promise, brought forward his Budget and the new taxes for the year. The demands which he had to make were large indeed—a loan of twenty-five millions and a half for England, and another million and a half for Ireland. To meet the charge thus accruing, he proposed new taxes upon a great variety of objects, as tea, timber, paper, and horses of every description, not even excepting those employed in agriculture, although upon a lesser scale. On the whole these new taxes were calculated at no less a yearly sum than 1,794,000*l.*; but so clear was the necessity which Pitt established, and so authoritative and convincing was his statement, that it did not

encounter even the semblance of an opposition. "The whole," says Mr. Rose, "passed off with unanimity, which never happened before in the seventeen years of his administration." "In the evening," so continues Mr. Rose in his journal of that day, "I went to him at his desire, and we were alone more than three hours in an extremely interesting conversation, in the course of which he was, beyond all comparison, more affected than I had seen him since the change first burst upon me, but nothing particularly leading to any new disclosure occurred. The most remarkable thing that fell from him was a suggestion that, on revolving in his mind all that had passed, it did not occur to him that he could have acted in any respect otherwise than he had done, or that he had anything to blame himself for except not having earlier endeavoured to reconcile the King to the measure about the Catholics, or to prevail with His Majesty not to take an active part on the subject. . . . . There were painful workings in his mind plainly discernible; most of the time tears in his eyes, and much agitated."

That same evening the King wrote to Mr. Pitt an affectionate letter expressing his joy at the triumphant success of his Budget that afternoon. It is a letter of the greater kindness from its unusual form—the only letter in the whole series which commences "My dear Pitt." Mr. Pitt, in answer, expressed his warm sense of the Royal condescension, and the King's rejoinder of the 20th was the close of the correspondence between them for a period of more than three years.

One of the first cares of Mr. Pitt, as soon as his resig-

nation became known, was to allay the disappointment of the Roman Catholics in Ireland. Lord Castlereagh wrote accordingly, under Pitt's own eye, to Lord Cornwallis; and Lord Cornwallis drew up to circulate among the Catholic chiefs a paper, which, though headed only as the "Sentiments of a sincere friend," was perfectly well understood to proceed from the Lord Lieutenant. It was very short; indeed, in only two sentences. In the first, the Roman Catholics were warned against "convulsive measures," or "associations with men of Jacobinical principles." In the second, they were told to "be sensible of the benefit they possess by having so many characters of eminence pledged not to embark in the service of Government except on the terms of the Catholic privileges being obtained."

In this last clause the Noble Marquis certainly evinced very little discretion or sound judgment. Some time afterwards he had not the least scruple in departing from it, so far as his own conduct was concerned; and when, in 1805, Mr. Plowden, the author of the 'History of Ireland,' addressed to him a question on the subject, it must be owned that his explanation was of the lamest kind. "I have not by me," he wrote, "a copy of that paper. If I did make use of the word *pledged*, I could only mean that in my own opinion the Ministers, by resigning their offices, gave a pledge of their being friends to the measure of Catholic emancipation; for I never received authority, directly or indirectly, from any member of administration who resigned his office, to give a pledge that he would not embark again in the service of Government except

on the terms of the Catholic privileges being obtained."[1]

The object in view, namely, the tranquillity of the Roman Catholics, was however for the present secured. They saw the exertions and the sacrifices which had been made in their cause. They forbore in general all violent proceedings, and all resentful language. They were as yet for the most part disposed to bide their time, and to rely upon their friends.

Meanwhile Mr. Addington was busy in filling up the vacant offices. Besides the members of the Cabinet, who had agreed with Mr. Pitt, and besides the two Irish chiefs, there were several men in lesser offices who, notwithstanding the urgent request of the late Prime Minister, insisted on resigning with him. The principal of these were Mr. Rose and Mr. Long, the joint Secretaries of the Treasury; Lord Granville Leveson Gower, one of the Lords of the Treasury; and Mr. Canning, joint Paymaster of the Forces.

It is related in Lord Malmesbury's journal that when the new Prime Minister saw Lord Granville Leveson on this occasion, he spoke of himself as "only a sort of *locum tenens* for Pitt." But I concur with Dean Pellew in rejecting this story. It seems to me wholly at variance with Addington's course and conduct only three weeks afterwards; and I think that in this instance, as in some others of the same period, Lord Malmesbury did no more than transcribe a current but much exaggerated rumour of the day.

[1] Cornwallis Correspondence, vol. iii. p. 348.

The issue of the Writs in the House of Commons was postponed until the new arrangements should be fully matured. But, in truth, Mr. Addington had little choice. The ablest men in the Government having withdrawn, and the Opposition being irreconcilable, he could only, as Lord Macaulay says, "call up the rear ranks of the old Ministry to form the front ranks of a new Ministry. And thus," as the same historian adds, "in an age pre-eminently fruitful of Parliamentary talents a Cabinet was formed containing hardly a single man who in Parliamentary talents could be considered as even of the second rate."[2]

In one respect, however, these appointments seem to me highly gratifying. The statesman who for his selfish ends had wrought all this confusion derived no advantage from it. On the contrary, he was signally humbled. "Never," as Lord Campbell says, "was there such a striking instance of an engineer 'hoist by his own petard.'" The King had lately seen a great deal of Lord Loughborough. He had been glad to lean on his Lordship's legal knowledge and skill. But at the same time he had become well acquainted with his Lordship's character, and I need not add to what opinion a thorough knowledge of that character would inevitably lead. So far from naming Lord Loughborough Prime Minister, as Lord Loughborough himself appears to have hoped, the King was fully determined that he should not even continue Chancellor. His Majesty designed that high office for Lord Eldon, whose

[2] Biographies, p. 212, ed. 1860.

perfect integrity and firmness of principle he justly esteemed; and on this point, as on most others, Addington was compliant to the Royal will.

This appointment of Lord Eldon was settled on the very first day between the Monarch and the Minister. On that day, the 5th of February, Mr. Addington could announce it to his friend Mr. Abbot, as we learn from the latter's Diary, and Addington added that he should endeavour to persuade Lord Loughborough to accept the Presidency of the Council. No wonder if, in the Diary of the same date, Lord Loughborough is described as "all consternation!" No wonder if, suddenly inverting his political course, he wrote to the King earnestly pressing His Majesty still to continue Mr. Pitt in office, and to rely upon "the generosity of Mr. Pitt's mind!"[3]

Nearly similar was the case of Lord Auckland. Though he had sided with the King, he had not gained the King's good opinion. In a conversation some weeks afterwards, he was described by His Majesty to Mr. Rose as "an eternal intriguer."[4] Though permitted in the new administration to retain his office as joint Postmaster-General, he was not called to any special confidence, nor admitted to a seat in the Cabinet.

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[3] This letter is not dated, but was, I think, beyond all doubt written at this period; and the papers it refers to as sent by the King for the Chancellor's perusal consisted of the correspondence between His Majesty and Mr. Pitt. Lord Campbell, who first published this letter (Lives of the Chancellors, vol. vi. p. 317), has erroneously placed it a month later, that is, on the King's recovery from his illness.

[4] Diaries of Mr. Rose, note at vol. ii. p. 158.

The King's wishes as to persons had been studiously consulted. To him the progress of the new arrangements was highly gratifying. He liked and he applauded every step of Mr. Addington. But at the same time His Majesty could not divest himself of deep anxiety. He must have felt that in losing Mr. Pitt he lost a tower of strength. He must have felt that a doubtful and clouded future was in view. Under such circumstances, and as if to tranquillize his mind, he reverted again and again to the religious obligation which he conceived to bind him. One morning—so his faithful equerry General Garth many years afterwards related—he desired his Coronation Oath to be once more read out to him, and then burst forth into some passionate exclamations: "Where is that power on earth to absolve me from the due observance of every sentence of that oath? . . . . No—I had rather beg my bread from door to door throughout Europe than consent to any such measure!" [5]

Another day, at Windsor—this was on the 6th or 7th of the month—the King read his Coronation Oath to his family, asked them whether they understood it, and added: "If I violate it, I am no longer legal Sovereign of this country, but it falls to the House of Savoy." [6]

In the middle of February the King fell ill. His illness was at first no more than a feverish cold. On the 17th he saw Mr. Addington, and on the 18th he saw the Duke of Portland. With the latter he talked

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[5] Note to Lord Sidmouth's Life, by Dean Pellew, vol. i. p. 286.

[6] Diaries of Lord Malmesbury, vol. iv. p. 21.

very calmly on the general aspect of state-affairs. "For myself," said His Majesty, "I am an old Whig; and I consider those statesmen who made barrier-treaties and conducted the ten last years of the Succession War the ablest we ever had." The Duke only noticed as unusual that the King spoke in a loud tone of voice.[7] But it is remarkable in this conversation that George the Third discerned, what since his time has become much more apparent, how, not by any sudden change, but by the gradual progress of events, the Whig party has drifted away from its first position in the reign of Queen Anne, and come round to occupy the original ground of its opponents.

The King's calmness in this interview did not long continue. A most grievous calamity was now impending over him from all the agitation and anxiety which he had just sustained. After an interval of twelve years his mind was once more deranged. The Duke of Portland was with him again on the 20th, and was then extremely alarmed. Next day, that is, on Saturday the 21st, the mental alienation was plainly manifested. On the Sunday Mr. Addington was for a short time admitted to his chamber, and afterwards reported to Mr. Pitt that he had found the King collected on some points, but wandering on others. Unhappily the symptoms, instead of diminishing, increased, and became at last not less acute than in 1788.

It is said that one of the earliest symptoms which the King publicly showed of his mental affliction was

[7] Diaries of Lord Malmesbury, vol. iv. p. 44.

in Chapel, and it may have been on this very Sunday. He repeated in a loud voice and with extraordinary emphasis, as though referring to his own accession in 1760, the well-known verse in the Morning Service: "Forty years long was I grieved with this generation, and said: It is a people that do err in their hearts, for they have not known *My* ways."

On the Monday the King was for many hours without speaking, and, it would seem, unconscious of what passed around him. Towards the evening he came to himself, and then said, "I am better now, but I will remain true to the Church." Thus at every intermission of his malady his mind at once reverted to the first cause of his distress. By an Order of the Privy Council, public prayers were offered up for His Majesty's recovery; and the three Doctors Willis were summoned to his aid.

On Tuesday the 24th, however, Lord Loughborough, as still holding the Great Seal, thought himself justified by the public exigency in going to Buckingham Palace and obtaining the King's signature to a Commission for giving the Royal Assent to an Act of Parliament. That Act was for the repeal of the Brown Bread Bill, which, as I have elsewhere shown, was passed in haste at the close of the preceding year, and which had been found very mischievous in practice. There is no doubt that all parties now concurred in desiring its repeal, and that a delay of that repeal would have been injurious; yet even this consideration scarcely suffices to vindicate the course which, under such circumstances, the Chancellor pursued. On

returning from the Palace, his Lordship said that when he had carried the Brown Bread Act to the King, His Majesty was in the perfect possession of his understanding.[8] But this was only his Lordship's public declaration. To Mr. Rose, as to a private friend, he owned that he had not seen the King at all. He had sent in the Commission to His Majesty by Dr. Willis, who brought it back signed, and told him that there would be no difficulty in obtaining the Royal Signature to a dozen papers respecting which no detailed statements were necessary.[9]

During many days the King's malady did not abate. During many days he was unable to see his Ministers, either the late or the new, or even the Queen and the Princesses. Meanwhile the Government was in a most anomalous, nay, unprecedented state. Here was one Cabinet in progress of formation, and sanctioned by the King. Here was another Cabinet which had resigned, but still holding the seals of office, and alone competent to do any official act. Here was Mr. Addington Prime Minister *de jure*. Here was Mr. Pitt Prime Minister *de facto*. It was only by the entire cordiality at this time between the two statesmen that confusion was avoided. They held several familiar conferences on the painful, but, as it seemed, unavoidable and close impending question of a Regency.

It was also on this question of Regency that the

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[8] Diaries of Lord Malmesbury, vol. iv. p. 17.

[9] Diaries of Mr. Rose, vol. i. p. 315. In 1801 and the three subsequent years this Diary and the accompanying correspondence become of the greatest value to the biography of Pitt.

Prince of Wales, so early as Monday the 23rd, commanded Mr. Pitt to attend him. "I have sent to consult you," said the Prince, "on the present distressing occasion." "Sir," said Mr. Pitt, "being *de facto* in the situation of Minister, I shall have no hesitation in giving your Royal Highness the best advice and opinions in my power. But there is one thing that I must be allowed very respectfully to state: I can do so only on the express condition that your Royal Highness will forbear to advise with those who have for a long time acted in direct opposition to His Majesty's Government." In answer, the Prince acquiesced as to the persons immediately alluded to by Mr. Pitt, but added that he should think himself still at liberty to advise from time to time with Lord Moira, as he had long been in the habit of doing.[1]

"I am afraid, from what I hear,"—so said Mr. Thomas Pelham to Lord Malmesbury—"that Mr. Pitt, when sent for by the Prince, was more stiff and less accommodating than he should have been." It was the opinion of Mr. Pelham and some others that the two contending parties at the last Regency should each to some extent give way. Pitt, on the contrary, was determined to maintain his own ground. He saw the Prince again on Wednesday the 25th, and frankly stated his intention to propose, and press if the necessity should arise, a measure of restricted Regency, as in 1789. In this view of his duty he was supported by the members of his Cabinet, even by those who in 1789 had opposed him, as the Duke of Portland,

[1] Diaries of Mr. Rose, vol. i. p. 311.

Lord Loughborough, and Lord Spencer. This was expressly mentioned by Mr. Pitt to the Prince. "Every one concerned," added Pitt, "not even excepting your Royal Highness, cannot do better than accord with what was then most evidently the clear sense of the Legislature, expressed in a manner not to be mistaken." The Prince muttered that some of the restrictions were likely to be found extremely inconvenient, but showed no displeasure, and observed that he must take time to consider all that Mr. Pitt had said. On the whole there seems every reason to believe that if the affair had proceeded, the Prince would have acquiesced in the Bill of 1789, and that it would have gone through both Houses with no opposition, or with next to none.

In conversation at this time with Mr. Rose, Mr. Pitt expressed a strong opinion that the Regent, if appointed, should call Mr. Addington to his councils; so that the King on his recovery might find in his service the person whom he had designed to place there. On the other hand, Rose, Canning, the Bishop of Lincoln, and others, earnestly endeavoured to dissuade Pitt from giving that advice. "It is my firm belief," said Rose, "that neither your friends nor yet the public would bear such an arrangement." It was the wish and the hope of all these gentlemen to see Pitt himself restored to power.

Great was the stir among all classes of politicians. Hopes and fears, rumours and surmises, flew from side to side. Public discussion was, however, as by common consent, avoided. One very foolish Member, Mr. Nicholls, did, indeed, give notice of a motion for the

27th in the House of Commons; but even his own friends did not scruple to inveigh against him. Mr. Fox, who had emerged from his retirement at St. Ann's, and intended to take his seat on that very day, postponed it, lest he should be thought to give any countenance to that mischievous course. "When," says Mr. Rose, "I went into the House of Commons [that afternoon] with Mr. Pitt, we found Mr. Sheridan on his legs, moving the adjournment of the House to Monday, to get rid of Mr. Nicholls's motion, and stating the utter impropriety of any discussion of public matters in the present uncertain state of the King's health." Mr. Pitt, who rose next, said that he gave Mr. Sheridan great credit for his conduct. He urged very strongly that no man with a heart, or who had the slightest feelings of humanity, or of gratitude, duty, and affection for a beloved Sovereign, would even allude to his situation at present. At the same time he assured the House that before it became necessary to take any steps of importance in public business, the state of His Majesty's health should be investigated, if, unhappily, His Majesty should not be able to give the proper directions. Addington was in the House, but did not speak, and the House readily agreed to the adjournment which Pitt advised. This short discussion is not even mentioned in the 'Parliamentary History,' but an authentic account of it may be derived from the valuable Diary of Mr. Rose.

To this discussion also Mr. Wilberforce in his journal briefly refers. "House suddenly up from Nicholls's absurdity and Pitt's extreme eloquence—too much partaking of stage-effect, but Pitt sincerely affected."

On the same day, as Mr. Rose further says, "Sir Robert Peel told me he had been urged by many independent men to state in the House of Commons the necessity of Mr. Pitt remaining in a responsible situation, and not abandoning the country. He referred plainly to the total want of confidence in Mr. Addington, and stated that to be general in and out of Parliament."

On the 2nd of March there was a crisis in the King's disorder. His Majesty was so ill that his life was almost despaired of; but having sunk into sleep, which continued for some hours, he awoke much refreshed, and from that time steadily mended. "On the whole," says Mr. Rose in his journal of the 3rd, "the alteration for the better appeared to be most extraordinary. The King was thought so well, that the Queen and the Princesses took an airing in their carriages. This account was brought to Mr. Pitt while in bed, before eight o'clock, by Mr. Addington. . . . . Mr. Addington came again to Mr. Pitt late in the day, when I was with him, and said the accounts from the Queen's House continued as favourable as possible."

During the next two days the King's health continued, though slowly, to improve. Nevertheless, on the 5th Pitt felt it necessary to consider seriously with his Treasury intimates how far it would be possible to prolong the *Interregnum*. It was absolutely requisite to obtain, without much further delay, the Royal sanction to the foreign despatches, and the Royal assent to the Parliamentary Bills. Pitt came to the conclusion that unless His Majesty should be quite well before the 12th, that

was the latest day to which he could defer an examination of the physicians either before the Privy Council or the House of Commons. In that case a Regency Bill might be brought in on the 14th, and might pass by the 23rd. This was on the supposition that it would be unopposed. And Mr. Pitt thought that it would not be safe to defer the inquiry of the physicians even till the 12th, unless it could be ascertained that no delay would be created. "In order to which," adds Mr. Rose, "Mr. Pitt agreed the best mode would be to have an intercourse with Mr. Fox, either by letter or through some person who can communicate directly with him; first waiting upon the Prince of Wales again to know whether His Royal Highness will acquiesce in the provisions of the last Regency Bill, with perhaps some modifications as to Peerages, confining that to one year, or till a certain period after the commencement of the next Session of Parliament."

Fox, like the Prince, appeared at this juncture well inclined to acquiesce without demur in the proposed restrictions. He had ended his secession, and returned to his post with great reluctance. He was most unfeignedly attached to the ease and leisure of his country life. Only a few weeks later, when summoned by his nephew, Lord Holland, to come up again from St. Ann's, we find him answer in his ever genial style: "Never did a letter arrive in a worse time, my dear young one, than yours this morning. A sweet westerly wind, a beautiful sun, all the thorns and elms just budding, and the nightingales just beginning to sing, though the blackbirds and

thrushes would have been quite sufficient, without the return of *those seceders*, to have refuted any arguments in your letter."[2]

At the beginning of March, however, Mr. Fox having taken his seat in the House of Commons, felt it his duty to enter into some concert of measures with his remaining friends on the possibility of his being called on by the Regent to form or to take part in a new administration. Lord Loughborough appears to have done his best at this juncture to ingratiate himself with his old ally. He called upon Fox, and as a token of his confidence revealed to him the important fact that he had not seen the King when he had carried to Court the Commission for the Brown Bread Bill.[3] But Fox knew Lord Loughborough well. In the event of his own accession to power, he had resolved to press the Great Seal upon his old enemy Lord Thurlow, and Lord Thurlow had made up his mind to accept the offer, but without the Speakership of the House of Lords, to which he felt his health and advancing age unequal.

It must be acknowledged that at this juncture, as at some others, the character of Lord Thurlow appears to little more advantage than Lord Loughborough's. Even the melancholy condition of his Sovereign could not soften that rugged and implacable breast. Lord Kenyon told Lord Eldon at this period that Lord Thurlow had been with him, and that his conversation about the King was perfectly shocking to his ears. "In short," added

[2] Fox Memorials and Correspondence, vol. iii. p. 189.

[3] "This Lord Loughborough told me himself."—Fox Memorials, vol. iii. p. 336.

Lord Kenyon, "he is a beast; and the conversation ended by my saying 'I swear to God, my Lord, I believe he (the King) is more in his senses than your Lordship!'"[4]

All questions of Regency, however, were set at rest by the King's convalescence. It is remarkable that the first favourable change was due to Mr. Addington, not indeed in his political, but rather in his filial capacity. He remembered to have heard from his father, the eminent physician, that a pillow filled with hops would sometimes induce sleep when all other remedies had failed; and the experiment being tried upon the King, was attended with complete success.[5] Some persons have supposed that a rumour of this fortunate prescription gave rise to the nickname of "the Doctor," which some months later was almost universally applied to Mr. Addington; but I doubt whether the report was ever so prevalent as to produce that popular taunt, which was only, I conceive, a reminiscence of his father's profession.

On Friday, the 6th of March, the King, though much reduced in strength, was clear and calm in mind. He sat for some time with the Queen and the Princesses. He desired Dr. Thomas Willis to write an account of his convalescence to Mr. Addington, to Lord Eldon, and to Mr. Pitt. With respect to Mr. Pitt His Majesty used the following words:—"Tell him I am now quite

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[4] Diaries of Mr. Rose, vol. i. p. 341.

[5] This curious fact, first, I think, stated with authority by Mr. Adolphus (History of England, vol. vii. p. 457), is confirmed by Dean Pellew (Life of Lord Sidmouth, vol. i. p. 309).

well—quite recovered from my illness; but what has *he* not to answer for who is the cause of my having been ill at all?"

Pitt was deeply affected. It had given to him and to his colleagues, who were retiring from the Cabinet, most heartfelt pain to find that their conscientious course of duty had been the means of bringing upon their Royal Master this heavy and unforeseen affliction. Lord Malmesbury has an entry as follows in his journal under the date of the 25th of February:—"Lord Spencer very much hurt at what has passed, and feeling a great deal for the share he has had in it; and Pitt, though too haughty to confess it, feels also a great deal."

Moved by these feelings and by the King's affectionate reproof, Mr. Pitt at once conveyed to him an assurance that he would never again during His Majesty's reign bring forward the Catholic Question. Lord Malmesbury heard that Mr. Pitt had conveyed this assurance in a letter to the King, but this appears to be an error of detail. In the first place, had Pitt written any such letter, it would certainly have called forth an answer from the King, and no trace of any such appears in the series of their manuscript correspondence. Secondly and chiefly, I think that we are enabled to trace the exact state of the case from a letter which some months afterwards Bishop Tomline addressed to Mr. Rose. At that time Mr. Rose expected to have some private talk with the King, and the Bishop wishes him to repeat to His Majesty the precise facts of the preceding spring:

Bishop of Lincoln to Mr. Rose.

"MY DEAR SIR, "Buckden Palace, Aug. 14, 1801.

"I am very glad that you think of going to Weymouth, and I am impatient that you should have the conversation with the King. Recollect that when the King was recovering from his illness, Mr. Pitt saw Dr. T. Willis at Mr. Addington's; and before Mr. Addington authorized Dr. Willis to tell His Majesty that during his reign he would *never* agitate the Catholic Question; that is, whether *in* office or *out* of office. Mr. Pitt left Dr. Willis and Mr. Addington together. I saw Dr. Willis's letter to Mr. Pitt, and I suspect that the message was not properly and fully delivered. All this is of course private history, but I think it very important.

. . . . . .

"Yours always most cordially,

"G. LINCOLN."

But further still I am enabled to give the very letter of Dr. Willis which the Bishop mentions.

Dr. Thomas Willis to Mr. Pitt.

"SIR, "Queen's House, ¼ past 8.

"Her Majesty, the Dukes of Kent and Cumberland, went into the King at half after five o'clock, and remained with him for two hours. They came out perfectly satisfied—in short everything that passed has confirmed all that you heard me say to-day. He has desired to see the Duke of York to-morrow, and all the Princesses in their turn.

"I stated to him what you wished, and what I had a good opportunity of doing; and, after saying the kindest

things of you, he exclaimed 'Now my mind will be at ease.' Upon the Queen's coming in, the first thing he told her was your message, and he made the same observation upon it.

"I stated also the whole of what you said respecting Hanover—which he received with perfect composure.

"You will not expect that I mean to show that the King is completely *well*, but we have no reason to doubt that he very soon will be so.

"I have the honour to be, Sir, &c.,

"THOMAS WILLIS."

Pitt made no secret to his immediate friends of the determination which he had thus expressed. But why, they asked themselves, should he then resign at all? If the Catholic Question is not to be stirred again by any Minister during the King's life, lest His Majesty's faculties should be once more subverted, where is the practical difference upon that question between Mr. Addington and Mr. Pitt? And if none upon that question, why then, when the pre-eminence of the latter is on all other points acknowledged, should the former at a period of the greatest national exigency be preferred before him?

On the grounds of public duty at a time of public danger, considerations such as these could not fail to weigh with the great Minister himself. Mr. Rose has noted in his Journal of the 6th, "Mr. Pitt seems to admit more than he has at all heretofore done, the possibility of its being right that he should remain, or rather return to his situation; in which possible case it would become necessary to dispose honourably and advantageously of Mr. Addington."

Mr. Pitt, however, was fully resolved to make no step of his own, no, not even the smallest, to the resumption of office. If he did resume it, that could be only at the request of others. The King must apply to him, and Mr. Addington must of his own accord offer him his place. Pitt therefore remained at rest. He made no communication to his colleagues of the Cabinet, but he talked without reserve upon the subject to such intimate friends as happened to be near him. He did not mention it to Lord Grenville, who had already gone to Dropmore.[6] But he talked of it especially to Rose; to Dundas, with whom, at his country house, he passed Sunday the 8th; and to Pelham, whom he met on horseback, as on the Monday he was riding back from Wimbledon. Pelham immediately communicated to Lord Malmesbury his impression of what had passed. "It was evident to me," he said, "that Pitt had thought the whole over and over again; that his mind was full of it; and that he was anxious to come in, but that his pride led him to wish that it should be by entreaty, not by any voluntary forward movement of his."

Some friends of Pitt at this time greatly disapproved of his reserve. "Pitt will not stir unless Addington begins," said Canning to Lord Malmesbury, on Sunday the 8th. "Surely," answered the veteran diplomatist, "this is a very erroneous idea."—"Pitt is to blame, highly to blame, I confess," said the young and eager politician. In the next few days, however, several common friends, though with no authority or commission from Pitt, went to call on Addington, and urged him to take measures

[6] See Lord Malmesbury's Diaries, vol. iv. p. 44.

with the King that Pitt might be invited to continue in office as Prime Minister. It can be no matter of surprise, and it should be no matter of blame, if Addington received this communication very coldly. Let his situation at the time be fairly considered. He had relinquished the post of Speaker, a post independent of all political vicissitudes, and adapted in an especial manner to his tastes and talents; and to that post his successor was already appointed. He had relinquished that post on the understanding, and, indeed, condition, that he was to be named Prime Minister; and he was now required to forego that prospect without being able to resume his former functions, and only left free to accept the office, if any, which it might be the pleasure of Pitt to bestow upon him. Of scarce any man could it be expected that he should entirely overlook personal considerations such as these; above all, since the main public advantage on the other side was one which Addington of all men might be excused if he did not unreservedly admit—I mean the great superiority of genius on the part of Pitt.

With these very natural feelings, Addington replied to the gentlemen who urged him to give way, that they might open the matter to the King if they pleased, but that he would not propose it, and he trusted they would think fit previously to consult the King's physicians as to the effect such a proposal might have upon His Majesty in his present state of health.[7]

This answer was, of course, quite decisive so far as

[7] Diary of Mr. Abbot (Lord Colchester), vol. i. p. 258. It is plain that Abbot's information was derived from Addington himself.

the expectant Prime Minister was himself concerned. Finally, Mr. Pitt put an end to the entire project, saying that he thought any application on his behalf utterly improper, that he was determined to give his strenuous support to the new administration, and that he expected his friends to do the same.

Under these circumstances, and the Ministerial arrangements of Addington being meanwhile in great measure matured, Saturday, the 14th of March, was the last day of Pitt's long administration. "On that day," as Mr. Rose details it, "Mr. Pitt went to the King at three o'clock, and returned about half-past four, and I saw him at five for a few minutes before he went to Mr. Addington. He had resigned the Exchequer Seal to His Majesty. He said His Majesty possessed himself most perfectly, though naturally somewhat agitated on such an occasion; that his kindness was unbounded. Mr. Pitt said he was sure the King would be greatly relieved by the interview being over, and his resignation being accepted; adding, what I am sure was true, that his own mind was greatly relieved.—Sunday, March 15. Mr. Pitt explained to me much more at large what passed when he was with the King yesterday; repeated that His Majesty showed the utmost possible kindness to him, both in words and manner; that His Majesty began the conversation by saying, that although from this time Mr. Pitt ceased to be his Minister, he hoped he would allow him to consider him as his friend, and that he would not hesitate to come to him whenever he might wish it, or when he should think he could do so with propriety; adding that

in any event he relied on his making him a visit at Weymouth, as he knew Mr. Pitt would go to his mother, in Somersetshire, in the summer."

Even at a previous interview, the last before His Majesty's illness, the King had in like manner expressed an earnest wish to see Mr. Pitt frequently as a friend. "I am sure, Sir," answered Pitt, "that your Majesty on a little reflection will be aware that such visits might give rise to much remark, and would be attended with inconvenience."

I have found scarce any letters of Mr. Pitt at this period. There is mention of one to his mother, but it has not been preserved.[8] Nearly all the other persons with whom he might desire to communicate were then in town.

I have now related in full detail, and brought to a final conclusion, the story of Mr. Pitt's retirement from office in 1801. It has often been said, both in England and abroad, and even now perhaps the rumour has not wholly died away, that the cause assigned by Mr. Pitt was only his ostensible and not his real motive. It has been asserted that he withdrew from office on account of the difficulties which he experienced or expected in the way of making peace. Lord John Russell and another eminent critic have some years since sufficiently disposed of this hostile allegation.[9] The original documents bearing on the question, some of which have but lately come to light, must, I am sure, con-

[8] It is mentioned by Mrs. Stapleton, writing to Mr. Rose, Feb. 11, 1801.

[9] Memorials of Fox, vol. iii. p. 252; Edinburgh Review, No. ccx. p. 354.

vince every careful and dispassionate reader that any such idea is entirely unfounded.

It is clear that Mr. Pitt felt himself bound, both by his past conduct and by his present opinions, to press forward the Catholic Question; that he would gladly, if he could, have overcome the Royal scruples; and that, far from seeking to escape from office, he resigned it with regret.

It is allowed on all hands that Mr. Pitt, in proposing to the King a measure which he deemed of high national importance, and in resigning when he could not obtain the King's assent to it, fulfilled the duty incumbent on a patriotic Minister. But there is by no means the same unanimity as to his subsequent course, when he promised to refrain from stirring the Catholic claims during the King's life, and was willing if solicited to remain in office. Believing as I do that his conduct at the latter period, as at the former, was not merely free from blame, but entitled to praise, I grieve to find myself at issue on this question with the eminent critic whom I just now cited. I allude to the author of two articles which appeared in the 'Edinburgh Review' of April 1856, and of January 1858, and which treat of the period now before us. Many persons have thought that they here discerned the hand of Sir George Cornewall Lewis; and certainly both these essays, in their discriminating powers of inquiry, their large stores of information, and their calm and sustained judicial temper, appear well worthy that distinguished man.

In the former of the articles which may thus in

general with no undue praise be described, I find an allusion to the unsuccessful attempt made by some friends of Mr. Pitt to restore him to office in March, 1801; an attempt "in which," it is added, "the conduct of this statesman does not appear to advantage." And the second article carries the criticism further. "We confess ourselves at a loss to justify, and scarcely even to explain, the course which Mr. Pitt pursued. Why, if he was so willing to remain in March, he was so resolved on resigning in February; or why, if he was so resolved upon resigning in February, he was so willing to remain in March; we are equally unable to determine."

On the other part, I would venture, in the first place, to ask how the critic can feel the smallest difficulty in explaining at least, if not in justifying, the change which he here describes. As reasonably might he state his surprise that the Emperor of Austria was not willing to treat on the 1st of December, 1805, and was willing on the 3rd of the same month; the fact being that the battle of Austerlitz was fought on the intervening day. The intervening illness of George the Third affords, as I conceive, a no less clear, a no less sufficient explanation. When it became manifest that the proposal of the Roman Catholic claims had not only wrung the mind of the aged King with anguish, but altogether obscured and overthrown it, the duty of a statesman, even if untouched by personal considerations, and acting solely on public grounds, was then to refrain from any such proposal during the remainder of His Majesty's reign. Loyal Roman Catholics themselves could not expect, could not even desire, their claims to be under

such circumstances urged. Let me moreover observe that the restraint which Mr. Pitt laid upon himself in consequence was one that came to be adopted by all other leading politicians of that age. It was on the same understanding that Lord Castlereagh took office in 1803; Mr. Tierney also in the same year; Mr. Canning in 1804; Lord Grenville and Mr. Fox in 1806. All these, with whatever reluctance, agreed that on this most tender point the conscience of George the Third should be no further pressed. And surely if the ground here stated was sufficient, as I deem it, to justify Mr. Tierney, who had never before held office, and who owed no special attachment to the King, the ground was far stronger in the case of Mr. Pitt, who had served His Majesty as Prime Minister through most trying difficulties and for more than seventeen years.

It may be said, however, that although Mr. Pitt was right to relinquish the Catholic Question in March, 1801, he should not have been willing to resume office at once upon such terms. If, however, the Catholic Question were honourably and for good reason laid aside, the special, and indeed the only, reason for calling in "the Doctor" was gone. Under him there was every prospect that the new Government would be a weak one—even far weaker than from various causes which I shall hereafter explain it really proved. I have already shown what were the anticipations upon this point of so experienced and so far-sighted a politician as Dundas. A weak Government was then in prospect; and that at a period when the national interests called most loudly for a strong one. It was the duty of a

patriot Minister to avert, if he honourably could, that evil from his country. It was his duty not to shrink from the service of his Sovereign, if that Sovereign thought fit to ask his aid, and if the question which had so recently severed them was from other and inevitable causes to sever them no more.

For these reasons I believe, and must be permitted to maintain, that the conduct of Mr. Pitt in March, 1801, is free from all ambiguity and open to no just imputation, but guided from first to last by the same high sense of duty as distinguished his whole career.

On giving up his official residence in Downing Street Mr. Pitt retired to a small furnished house in Park Place. It had lately been occupied by one of the Under Secretaries of State, and Mr. Pitt had purchased the remainder of the lease, extending to the period of one year. "A set of dinners for Pitt; he declined them all"—so writes Wilberforce at this time. In the House of Commons, whenever Pitt attended, he took his seat—as Mr. Abbot at the time describes it —"on the right hand of the Chair, in the third row from the floor, and in the angle next one of the iron pillars." Many years afterwards, in the former House of Commons, I have seen old Members point out the very place with something of a reverent feeling.

In the Ministerial changes of March and April, 1801, Lord Cornwallis and Lord Castlereagh had quitted their posts rather on account of their connexion with Ireland and of their engagements with the Catholics

than from any especial tie at that time to Mr. Pitt. But, in his retirement the late Prime Minister was followed by a small band of trusty friends who, in spite of his entreaties, would not remain in office without him. Chief among these were Long and Rose, and, above all, Canning. Of Mr. Long I have spoken elsewhere.[1] Mr. Rose had no gifts of genius nor powers of eloquence: on the other hand he was an eminently practical and most useful man of business. We find in the course of his long career persons under almost every form of difficulty apply for counsel, and seldom without effect, to his tried sagacity and shrewdness. These qualities were in him combined with a kind and generous heart. To Pitt so long as he lived, and to the memory of Pitt after he was gone, Mr. Rose evinced a devoted and constant attachment; and to act in conformity to the views of that great Minister was, throughout, the aim and the pride of his public life.

Mr. Canning, as he was in 1801, has been well portrayed by Lord Macaulay in a single sentence, as "young, ardent, and ambitious, with great powers and great virtues, but with a temper too restless and a wit too satirical for his own happiness."[2] It may be added that these faults during a long period of succeeding years tended to dim the lustre of his genius, and to delay the ascendency which that genius deserved; but in spite of them he was perhaps the favourite disciple of Mr. Pitt, and certainly the most renowned.

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[1] See vol. ii. p. 123.

[2] Biographies, p. 216, ed. 1860.

The following letter from that period will in some degree illustrate the restless temper which Lord Macaulay mentions:—

Mr. Pitt to Mr. Canning.

"Park Place, April 26, 1801.

"MY DEAR CANNING,

"I return you your letter to Frere, and heartily wish I could do so without saying a single word on the subject to which it relates. I do not now mean to enter into any particulars on which it would be useless to dwell, but I should be guilty of great insincerity if I did not own to you that I do not acquiesce in the idea that there has been anything unkind, much less unfair, in any part of my conduct, or anything either for me to excuse or for you to complain of or to forgive. You certainly were the very first person acquainted with the determination I was likely to form; and I am much mistaken if even in our first conversation I did not express the intention—in which I have never varied—of giving the fullest support to the formation and to the measures of any administration composed of persons acting on the same general principles as I had done. In the incessant and anxious occupations of the succeeding days, it is not surprising that I did not seek a further communication with you till the business was brought more to a point; and after it was so I certainly considered myself as stating to you explicitly and earnestly both my wishes and opinions before you could have been called upon to commit yourself as to your own line of conduct. In addition to this you heard both from myself and, I believe, from others, what the line was which I had persuaded all those to adopt with whom my wishes

and opinions were most likely to have weight. Under the circumstances I most deeply lament your having misunderstood me as you now appear to have done, and still more the effect which that misunderstanding has produced; but I really cannot ascribe this to any fault of mine. Having said this, I have no other wish but to dismiss this subject from my mind; and though I am aware that at present there may be some political subjects on which we cannot converse with the freedom with which we have done till lately, I trust that circumstance will not make any change in our intercourse on all other points. I am sure it has made none in my feelings of friendship and attachment to you, or in my earnest wishes for the happiness of your future life, whatever may be its course.

"With these sentiments, which I state without disguise,

"I remain sincerely and affectionately yours,

"W. PITT."

Many persons who had consented to remain in their old offices did not scruple to avow their strong feelings of attachment to Mr. Pitt. Such an attachment was avowed even by some of those who then accepted new office. Thus Lord Eldon, when he agreed to take the Great Seal, said in express words to Mr. Addington that "he accepted it only in obedience to the King's command, and at the advice and earnest recommendation of Mr. Pitt; and that he would hold it no longer than he could continue to do so in perfect friendship with the latter."[3]

[3] As repeated by Lord Eldon himself to Mr. Rose, February 24, 1801.

Another person who at this time attached himself with great zeal to Mr. Pitt was Henry Lord Mulgrave. In 1792 he had succeeded his brother in that —an Irish—peerage; and, in 1794, was himself created an English Baron. Since that time, though filling no office, he had taken part, and with success, in the debates of the House of Lords.

But of all the personal adhesions which Pitt in his retirement received, there was none certainly of which he had greater reason to be proud than that expressed in the following letter from the Governor General of India.

Marquis Wellesley to Mr. Pitt.

"My dear Pitt, "Patna, Oct. 6, 1801.

"Although you have been so cruelly lazy as not to send me one line on the subject of the late unparalleled changes in the administration, I cannot allow this packet to depart without renewing to you the sincere assurance of my unalterable attachment and of the truly affectionate interest which I must ever take in any event likely to affect your welfare, with which are involved all our national greatness and honour. I trusted that you would have explained to me the causes and prepared me for the probable consequences of the new arrangements, and that you would have distinctly stated to me the part which you wished me to take in such a crisis. I rely on the testimony of my own heart that you must have felt an implicit confidence in my firm adherence to your cause under any exigency which might arise. When that cause shall cease to be the master-spring of our councils, I shall wish to retreat from the disgrace of office to whatever *fortress* you may choose to defend.

My political connexion with you, confirmed by every tie of friendship and intimate intercourse of private regard and affection, is become not only the pride but the comfort of my life; and I never can support the idea of considering you in any other light than as the guide of my public conduct, the guardian of all that I hold dear and valuable in our constitution and country, and the primary object of my private esteem, respect, and attachment. To these sentiments I would in an instant sacrifice—not only without regret, but with the greatest pleasure—the most lucrative, honourable, and powerful station which any British subject can hold. If, therefore, I had imagined, from the apparent aspect of affairs in England and from the tenor of your conduct, that the crisis had appeared to you to menace either the cause which you have so long maintained, or your own public or private honour, I should have resigned my present office without waiting for any advices from you; leaving, however, to the Court of Directors and to the new Ministers a sufficient time for the choice of my successor in England and for his arrival in India. This degree of delay I conceive to be an indispensable duty in any person holding my present charge. The consequences of an abrupt dissolution of any existing government in India might be fatal to the power of Great Britain in this quarter. I therefore should not quit this government, even if Charles Fox were to become Minister or Horne Tooke First Consul, until I had allowed a reasonable time for my regular relief.

. . . . . .

"Ever yours most sincerely and affectionately,

"WELLESLEY."

CHAPTER XXXI.

1801.

Character of Addington — Composition of the new Cabinet — Debates in Parliament — Speech of Lord Auckland — Pitt's praise of the new Ministers — Fox's reply — Horne Tooke excluded from the House of Commons — Battle of Copenhagen — Assassination of the Emperor Paul — Dissolution of the Armed Neutrality — Battle of Alexandria — Death of Sir Ralph Abercromby — Negotiations for peace — Pitt's pecuniary embarrassments — Contributions of his friends — Sale of Holwood — Preliminaries of Peace — Conduct of Pitt in the negotiations — Ratification of the Preliminary Articles —Fox's speech at the Shakespeare.

HENRY ADDINGTON, the new Prime Minister, was older than Pitt by two years, and survived him no less than thirty-eight, dying in 1844. During the whole of this long career he was most justly esteemed and beloved in all the relations of private life. I had myself the honour of his acquaintance for a part of this latter period, and could bear witness to his benignity of countenance and suavity of manner—to the kindness with which in his serene and revered old age he would welcome even a very young man, and allow him a share of his instructive conversation, rich with the memories of a loftier time. For eleven years he occupied the Chair of the House of Commons, to better public advantage than any Speaker since Onslow. For almost as long a period in Lord Liverpool's administration he

held the Seals of Secretary of State for the Home Department with vigilance, good judgment, and success. If as Prime Minister he fell far short of the Royal expectations and of the public exigency, let it in justice to him be remembered how arduous and how full of peril were those times. If now in the due estimation of his character there be found some lack both of oratorical distinction and first-rate political ability, let us not forget with what pre-eminent men it was his lot to be compared. How few, how very few, have there been from the earliest ages of the world who could sustain a parallel with Pitt as a statesman, or with Pitt and Fox as debaters!

No sooner, in February, 1801, had Addington responded to the call of George the Third, than angry suspicions against him arose in some of Pitt's friends. Mr. Rose thought that he had snatched the government too eagerly. The Bishop of Lincoln thought that he had attained it by an underhand intrigue.[1] Both were of opinion that his regard for Mr. Pitt was not real, but pretended. For my part, I am convinced that those charges were quite unfounded. Addington appears to me to have acted throughout as a man of integrity and honour. I believe also that the friendship between him and Pitt was then, and for many months afterwards, on both sides unbroken and sincere.

In the new Ministerial appointments Addington appears to have greatly consulted the personal tastes and

[1] See especially two passages in Mr. Rose's Diaries, vol. i. p. 309 and 317.

leanings of the King. His Majesty was in consequence delighted with his new Prime Minister, and often applied to him endearing epithets, as "my Chancellor of the Exchequer"—"my own Chancellor of the Exchequer." Here, in proof, is a note on the completion of the first list.

The King to Mr. Addington.

"Sunday Evening, March 15, 1801.

"His Majesty has received the box containing the new appointments of Postmaster, as also that of joint Paymaster. The King cannot find words sufficiently expressive of His Majesty's cordial approbation of the whole arrangements which *his own Chancellor of the Exchequer* has wisely and, His Majesty chooses to add, most correctly recommended. "GEORGE R."

A few weeks afterwards the King further manifested his entire satisfaction with his Minister by granting, as he recommended, a large promotion in the Peerage. Five Barons—namely, Lords Craven, Onslow, Romney, Pelham, and Grey de Wilton — were created Earls, three with the same titles, but Pelham as Earl of Chichester, and Grey as Earl of Wilton.

But while the King thus showed his entire approval of the new Prime Minister, he was well aware how much he must depend on the assistance of the former. It is recorded of His Majesty, that in one of his Levees this spring he drew Mr. Pitt and Mr. Addington aside into a recess of one of the windows: "If we three," he said, "do but keep together, all will go well."[2]

[2] Life of Lord Sidmouth, by Dean Pellew, vol. i. p. 331.

The Cabinet as Mr. Addington formed it consisted of nine persons. There were five Peers—namely, Lord Eldon, Lord Chatham, Lord Westmorland, the Duke of Portland, and Lord St. Vincent as First Lord of the Admiralty. There were four Commoners, all except Addington himself the eldest sons of Earls—namely, Lord Hobart, Lord Lewisham, and Lord Hawkesbury, who was Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs. Lord Hardwicke was named Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, with Mr. Charles Abbot for Secretary.

In the Law departments, at least, if not in those of State, Addington obtained a most brilliant accession to his ranks. In the place of Lord Eldon, Sir Richard Pepper Arden had been named Chief Justice of the Common Pleas, with the title of Lord Alvanley. Thus the Mastership of the Rolls became vacant, and to this Sir William Grant was appointed. Two younger men, of the highest promise, Mr. Law and the Hon. Spencer Perceval, became respectively Attorney and Solicitor General.

A little later there was a slight change in some of these arrangements. Lord Cornwallis having resigned the Ordnance, it was given to Lord Chatham, while the Duke of Portland was transferred to the Presidency of the Council. Thus room was made for Thomas Pelham, now Lord Pelham, who became Secretary of State for the Home Department.

I ought also to point out that the members of the new administration, out of the Cabinet at least, were by no means all opponents of the Roman Catholic claims. Take the case of the new Lord Lieutenant of

Ireland. We learn from his secretary, that Lord Hardwicke consented to take office on the public ground required of him, "namely, that he was against *now* agitating the question, reserving himself for other times and circumstances upon the principle."[3] This was exactly the ground which Mr. Pitt would have taken after the King's illness.

It may be observed that the name of Lord Loughborough was not in the new Cabinet list. Addington, as we have seen, desired to make him President of the Council, but, for some reason not explained, the appointment never took place. The omission of his name may be most probably ascribed to the accurate knowledge of his character which the King had recently acquired. Lord Loughborough was in deep chagrin. Once or twice he went to the meetings of the new Cabinet uninvited; and it required a very explicit letter from Addington before he would surrender the Cabinet key.[4] His Lordship was but little consoled by his promotion in the peerage as Earl of Rosslyn, with remainder to his nephew. He retired to a villa near Windsor, where, in ignorance of the King's sentiments towards him, he applied himself to cultivate the King's favour, and became a constant dangler at the Court.

No sooner had the new Government been constituted than there was a field-day upon it in both Houses. In both the form was the same—for a Committee of the whole House on the State of the Nation. On the 20th

[3] Diary of Mr. Abbot, February 20, 1801.

[4] The letter of Addington, dated April 25, 1801, has been published by Lord Campbell (Lives of the Chancellors, vol. vi. p. 327).

of March this was moved by the Earl of Darnley in the Peers. Lord Grenville, amongst others, defended the late Ministers, and Lord Westmorland the new; though both equally concurred in deprecating the motion then before them. "A review of the whole conduct of the war," said, on the other hand, Lord Carnarvon, "affords ample matter for necessary inquiry. Above three hundred millions have been expended in a war of only nine years." In like manner Lord Lansdowne inveighed against the entire scope and object of the war, not perhaps without some of those nice subtleties, those fine-drawn distinctions, which, in a parody of his Lordship's speeches, the 'Political Eclogues' had once so happily exposed.

"A Noble Duke affirms I like his plan;
I never did, my Lords! I never can!
Plain words, thank Heaven, are always understood:
I could approve, I said—but not I would."

There were several other speeches on Lord Darnley's motion previous to the division, which gave, including proxies, 28 votes for the motion, and 115 against it. But of all the speeches that evening, Lord Auckland's excited by far the most attention. He began by paying some high compliments to Mr. Pitt, and he referred to the long friendship between them. Then he came to the recent resignations: "And here, my Lords," he said, "I am brought to a dilemma. On the one hand I cannot discover a sufficient cause for the unhappy resignations which took place in a moment of accumulating difficulties. On the other it is impossible that men of high spirit and of such fair and

well-founded ambition could for a moment be affected by a desire to have less fatigue or less responsibility. It is not in human nature or in history that Generals inured to great actions, and born to achieve them, can without motives of good and superior import get into their post-chaise and quit their army in the time of action. I am obliged, then, to have recourse to the words of a Noble Earl (Carlisle), and to say that there is in this business a mystery and something difficult for one man to explain to another. There is a veil through which the eye cannot penetrate. Time and circumstances may remove that veil; it cannot be drawn aside by the Committee which the present motion seeks to establish."

It might have been desirable that Lord Grenville, as the leader of the late administration in the House of Peers, should rise in reply to this "dear and intimate friend." But he had already spoken twice, and was obliged to remain silent. In his place, Lord Spencer with spirit, though in few words, and as some by-standers thought, too gently, answered Lord Auckland, and denied his imputation.

That imputation, however, provoked the utmost resentment and surprise amongst all Pitt's friends: "Lord Auckland," writes Lord Malmesbury, "has received from Pitt obligations that no Minister but one possessing the power of Pitt could bestow, or any one less eager for office than Lord Auckland ask. Yet scarce has he left office than Lord Auckland insinuates that he did it from some concealed motive, and that the ostensible one is insincere!"

Mr. Rose was by no means less indignant, as a letter from him the next morning showed:—

Mr. Rose to Lord Auckland.

"MY LORD, "Saturday Evening, March 21.

"The account I have had this day of what fell from your Lordship in the House of Lords last night must interrupt the intercourse I have had with your Lordship during the last fourteen or fifteen years. Ever since I have mixed in public matters, I have thought it possible that persons taking different lines in politics (separated very widely indeed on subjects of that sort) might mix pleasantly in private society, at least occasionally; but there are circumstances in the present case of so peculiar a nature as to render that impossible with respect to your Lordship and me. It would be as painful to me to enter upon these as I think it would be to you to have them even more directly alluded to. You will, of course, not take the trouble of calling on me for the papers we talked about this morning.

"I am, my Lord, &c.,

"GEORGE ROSE."

Pitt himself viewed the affair in nearly the same light. He was too proud to make any complaint. But he broke off all intercourse with Lord Auckland; and as I believe, never again exchanged a word with him.

A debate corresponding to that of the Lords took place in the Commons on the 25th of the same month. Grey, who moved for the Committee, made a long and able speech, censuring on several grounds of charge the whole course of the late administration. Dundas, who followed, and who also spoke with much ability, replied

to him point by point. After several other speakers, Pitt rose. He did not dissemble or deny the regret with which he had quitted office before concluding peace. "I pretend to no such philosophy," he said, "to no such indifference to the opinion of others as some persons choose to affect. I am not indifferent to the circumstances of this country. I am not indifferent to the opinion which the public may entertain of the share—the too large share, which I have taken in them. On the contrary, I confess that these topics have occupied my attention much. Events have happened which disappointed my warmest wishes and frustrated the most favourite hopes of my heart; for I could have desired to pursue the objects of such hopes and wishes to the end of that struggle which I had worked for with anxiety and care."

Pitt then proceeded to express in strong terms his entire confidence in his successors. "Are these gentlemen," he asked, "called to a situation that is new to them? Yes; but are they new to the public? Not so; for they are not only not new to the House and the public, but they are not new to the love and esteem of the House and the public, and that from sufficient experience as to their principles and talents."

But not satisfied with this general praise, Pitt singled out several of the Ministers for especial commendation: "Again, I will say that if I see a Noble Lord (Hawkesbury) called to the situation of a Secretary of State, I am ready to ask, without the fear of receiving any answer that would disappoint me, whether gentlemen on the other side know any man who is superior to that

Noble Lord. . . . I will put it to their modesty whether any one among them except one Hon. Gentleman (Mr. Fox), whose attendance was of late so rare that he might almost be considered as a new Member—whose transcendent talents indeed make him an exception to almost any rule in everything that required uncommon powers, but whose conduct was also what ought generally speaking to be an exception also to the rules that guide the affairs of this country; which conduct has been at variance in some respects from that of almost every other public man, and which conduct, if followed, must have been highly injurious to the true interest of this country:—I repeat it, I know of no one on the opposite side of the House, except the Hon. Gentleman, that is more than equal to my Noble Friend in capacity for business."

Pitt next adverted with high praise to Lord Eldon and to Lord St. Vincent—the one destined in a signal manner to fulfil and the other to falsify his favourable anticipations. In another part of the same comprehensive speech he discussed at length the cause of his recent resignation and the claims of the Roman Catholics. As to the latter he observed: "I will say only at present, that as to anything which I and my colleagues meditated to bring forward, I disclaim the very words in common use, 'the emancipation of the Catholics,' or 'Catholic emancipation.' I have never understood that subject so; I never understood the situation of the Catholics to be such; I do not now understand the situation of the Catholics to be such as that any relief from it could be correctly so described; but I think

the few remaining benefits of which they have not yet participated might have been added safely to the many benefits which have been so bounteously conferred on them in the course of the present reign."

Again, without any express reference to the debate in the other House, Pitt haughtily cast back the charge which Lord Auckland had implied: "I would observe that I have lived to very little purpose for the last seventeen years of my life if it is necessary for me to say that I have not quitted my situation in order to shrink from its difficulties; for in the whole of that time I have acted, whether well or ill it is not for me to say, but certainly in a manner that had no resemblance to shrinking from difficulty. I may even say this:—if I were to strike the seventeen years out of the account, and refer only to what has taken place within the last two months, I will venture to allege that enough has happened within that time to wipe off the idea of my being disposed to shrink from difficulty, or wishing to get rid of any responsibility. What has happened within that period has afforded me an opportunity of showing, in a particular manner, that I was willing to be responsible to any extent which my situation cast upon me."

When Pitt had sat down Fox sprang up. In his opening sentence he most felicitously turned in his own favour the expression which Pitt had pointed against him. "Sir, late as the hour is, I shall beg leave, even under the designation of 'a new Member,' with which the Right Hon. gentleman has complimented me, to avail myself of the indulgence which the House usually

shows to a person of that description." With great vigour he then proceeded to arraign the entire conduct of the late administration, and to controvert all the arguments of Pitt.

"Now, Sir, I come to the consideration of the late change of administration. . . . As to the mere change, it is true that no change can be for the worse; for I defy the Evil Genius of the country to pick out an equal number of men from any part of England, whose measures could in the same space of time reduce the country to a more deplorable state than that in which the retired ministers have left it. But was there no alternative for the country between them and their exact successors? . . . . The late Chancellor of the Exchequer, not perhaps quite freely from redundancy, has blended with his panegyric of the Right Hon. gentleman over against me (Mr. Addington) a gaudy picture of the importance of the Chair which you, Sir, occupy. . . . A man, however, may be an excellent chairman of this House, as the late Speaker undoubtedly was, without being exactly qualified for the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer. At the present moment this is all that I think it necessary to say with regard to the respectable gentleman whom you, Sir, have succeeded.

"The next in point of importance, both of office and character, is the Noble Lord upon the opposite bench (Lord Hawkesbury), who has richly shared those florid praises which the Right Hon. gentleman has poured so fluently upon the whole body of his successors. I assure the Noble Lord that I have as much respect for him as I can have for any person of whom I personally know so

little. He has been, it is true, a member of this House for many years, and, I doubt not, a very diligent member; but if you had polled the country, not an individual could be found in it less happily selected for the peculiar department he occupies than the Noble Lord;—the Noble Lord who, in whatever else he may surpass them, does not yield to any one of those whom he officially succeeds in the virulence of his obloquies upon the French Revolution; who has spent as many hours in this House as any member of the late or present ministry in showing the irredeemable infamy of treating with that 'republic of regicides and assassins.' Never, surely, was there a worse calculated proposer of peace to Paris than the very Noble Lord who was for cutting the matter quite short and marching off-hand to that capital."

After Fox, Addington rose. It was the first time of his addressing the House as Minister. In a few sentences he summed up the previous debate with propriety and without discredit; and the House then dividing, showed only 105 votes for the motion, and 291 against it.

I have dwelt the longer on these two debates in the Lords and Commons, since it may be said that with them for the time all systematic opposition to the new administration ended. Mr. Pitt continued to give it his support; Mr. Fox perceived that he should gain nothing by any attempt to overthrow it. The necessary measures of finance had been adjusted by Pitt before his retirement; and all the other measures—as one to extend the duration of the Martial Law Bill in Ireland—passed, not indeed without objection, but without difficulty.

The main question which at this time engaged the attention of the Legislature was, or should have been, of a judicial rather than of a party character. In the month of February Mr. Horne Tooke had been returned a Member of Parliament for the borough of Old Sarum. This was by the influence of the second Lord Camelford, a most eccentric man both in private and in public life. In the last he had not only opposed the Government, of which his cousin Mr. Pitt and his brother-in-law Lord Grenville were the chiefs, but he had joined the extremest rank of their opponents, and it was from these that Horne Tooke was on a vacancy selected.

Here, however, a question of right or of law arose. Horne Tooke had once taken Priest's Orders—was it in his power to renounce them; and if not, could he sit in the House of Commons? The eldest son of the Marquis of Buckingham, Earl Temple, took the lead against his cousin's nominee. Horne Tooke himself spoke several times both on his own case and on other subjects. He observed that he had cast aside all clerical functions thirty years ago. "And is," he asked, "a quarantine of thirty years not a sufficient guard against the infection of my original character?"

In his several speeches this no longer Reverend gentleman was listened to with profound silence and attention. But he by no means fulfilled the expectations which his abilities had raised. It was unfortunate for his fame that in feeble health and at the age of sixty-four he should have consented to appear upon this new and untried scene. Such broad jests and repartees as had delighted the Hustings fell flat upon the House. Nor

was he self-possessed and able to do justice to his powers. "I hardly knew," he said afterwards, "whether I stood on my head or my heels." From the scope of some of his remarks, the former might perhaps be presumed.

The plan proposed by Lord Temple was very summary—to move at once a new writ for Old Sarum. But Addington said that he should prefer a legislative measure. On the other hand, Fox, Erskine, and Grey, and their new confederate in the other House, Lord Thurlow, spoke strongly in favour of the eligibility of priests. Their arguments did not prevail, and a Bill was carried through by a large majority, declaring that persons in Holy Orders were not entitled to sit in the House of Commons.

In consequence of this Act Horne Tooke for the remainder of his life (he died in 1812) returned to his villa at Wimbledon, and to the enjoyment of literary leisure. But in 1802 he found an opportunity in addressing the electors of Westminster to refer with a most bitter taunt to the proceedings against himself. "I acknowledge it," he said, "to be an act of mercy in my old electioneering comrade, the present Chancellor of the Exchequer, who brought in the Bill; for if instead of this exclusion he had proposed to hang me immediately in the lobby, he or any other Chancellor of the Exchequer would have been followed by the same majority." [5]

The new Ministers, as we have seen, had been appointed in March, 1801. Within a very few weeks they were cheered by good news from several parts of the

[5] Life of Horne Tooke, by A. Stephens, vol. ii. p. 263.

Continent. An expedition to the Baltic, prepared by their predecessors, was on the point of sailing. It consisted of eighteen sail of the line, and the Board of Admiralty had appointed Sir Hyde Parker as its chief; a most unwise concession to the claim of seniority, since Lord Nelson was now the second in command. When Nelson joined the fleet at Yarmouth, he found the Admiral "a little nervous about dark nights and fields of ice."—"But we must brace up," said he; "these are not times for nervous systems."

The nervous system of Sir Hyde Parker was still more sorely tried on the memorable 2nd of April, when Nelson, at the head of the first division of ships, most intrepidly assailed the batteries and the fleet at Copenhagen. He was still contending hand to hand with the gallant Danes when the signal Number Thirty-Nine, to "leave off action," was hoisted in the distance by his faltering chief. At all risks to himself, and intent only on the public object, Nelson resolved to persevere. "Leave off action!" he cried; "now d—— me if I do! You know, Foley"—and here he turned to his Captain—"I have only one eye;—I have a right to be blind sometimes;" and then, putting the glass up to his blind eye, he added bitterly, "I really do not see the signal!" Presently he exclaimed, "D—— the signal! Keep mine for closer battle flying! That's the way I answer such signals! Nail mine to the mast!"[6] The result was one of the most splendid naval victories that even the British annals can boast. We gained by it everything that we

[6] Southey's Life of Nelson, p. 248.

desired. Nelson, going on shore the day but one after, concluded with the Prince Royal an armistice, according to which Denmark suspended, or in fact relinquished, her accession to the confederacy formed against us—the alliance of the Armed Neutrality.

It might be curious to compare on this occasion the private letters addressed to the First Lord of the Admiralty by the two commanders; Admiral Parker perhaps alleging that, according to the "rules laid down by the best writers," and "on a consideration of all circumstances, local as well as others," the battle ought not to have been fought; Nelson asking pardon as best he might for his glorious disobedience. The issue with any Ministers in England could not be doubtful. Nelson was raised a step in the peerage as a Viscount, and Parker was recalled.

At Petersburg a similar result was brought about by a wholly different train of events. There the mental aberration of the Emperor Paul had become more and more painfully apparent. His capricious freaks of despotism, suddenly decided on, and as suddenly revoked, threatened ruin to his empire, and kept in constant peril every one around him. Perhaps his real state at this time may best be shown in a caricature of him which was secretly circulated: on the paper in his right hand is inscribed *Order;* on the paper in his left *Counter-Order;* and over his forehead *Disorder.* Under such circumstances a conspiracy was formed against him in his very palace, from the ranks of his own most trusted official servants. The object, it would seem, was not to take his life, but to force from him a resignation

in favour of his son. But when, in the night of the 23rd of March, the conspirators accordingly burst into his chamber and secured his person, Paul attempted some resistance; a scuffle ensued; and, in the midst of the confusion, the Emperor was slain.

On the death of Paul, his eldest son, a young prince of amiable disposition and promising abilities, was immediately proclaimed, under the title of Alexander the First. One of the earliest acts of the new Sovereign was to set free the British sailors and to restore the property of the British merchants that Paul had seized. Henceforth there was no difficulty in the negotiations with the Court of Russia; and Sweden also, after those events, showed herself ready to grant any satisfaction that we might require. Thus did the league of the Armed Neutrality, which seemed so fraught with peril to us at the commencement of the year, dissolve into thin air ere yet the spring was past.

Upon Egypt, as upon Denmark, an attack had been planned by the late administration. It was designed that some regiments of Sepoys despatched from India should be conveyed up the Red Sea and enter Egypt on that side, while a body of British troops should act from the Mediterranean. There was considerable delay in the progress of the former, but at the beginning of March the British troops appeared off the coast of Aboukir. They were about fourteen thousand strong, and for their chief had Sir Ralph Abercromby. At the sight of their boats advancing, the French outposts, under General Friant, bravely rushed down from the sand-hills, and withstood them even at the water's edge;

but the first division, with their bayonets fixed, successfully effected their landing, and repulsed their gallant foe. The whole body then coming on shore, advanced within a few days to the heights before Alexandria, and secured a strong position, reducing also on their right the castle of Aboukir.

At these tidings General Menou marched in all haste from Cairo with the main body of the French. Besides their other difficulties at this period, there was great rivalry and discord among their Generals; and Menou, as their chief, had by no means the energy required by so trying an occasion. On the 21st of March, however, he assailed the English army with great spirit, but was repulsed on all points, with a loss, as it was calculated, of four thousand men. The exultation of the victors was damped by the fall of their own gallant chief, Sir Ralph Abercromby, who was grievously wounded in the action, and who expired a few days afterwards. Nevertheless, General Hutchinson, who succeeded him in the command, pursued his advantages, and while the French in Alexandria were closely pressed by the British army, Cairo was again threatened by the Grand Vizier with a rabble of Turks.

In these last events there is one point which some writers have wholly overlooked. Those, like Lord Macaulay, who denounce the ill success of Mr. Pitt in every enterprise by land—who dwell upon the failure of the expeditions to Brittany and Holland—say nothing of the expedition to Egypt upon the other side. They appear to count it as belonging to Mr. Addington's administration; and no doubt it was under Addington

that the actions in Egypt were fought, and the French invaders were overthrown. But it was under Pitt that the entire enterprise was resolved on and equipped, its commander chosen, and its operations planned. If then Pitt is to be held in any measure answerable for the reverses of Quiberon or of the Helder—if a slur is on that account to be cast upon his fame—surely it is no more than just that his biographers should claim for him one laurel-leaf at least from the victor's wreaths at Aboukir.

In another quarter Portugal was threatened by Spain with an unjust aggression; and Spain had the support of France. On the 18th of May Lord Hawkesbury, in the House of Commons, moved a subsidy of 300,000*l.* to our ancient ally. Mr. Grey, though not intending to divide against the vote, stated some grounds of objection to it, and declaimed against the entire foreign policy of the late administration. Next rose Mr. Pitt. "The Hon. gentleman," he said, "thinks this proposal comes too late, and is too small for the purpose of affording effectual relief to Portugal. If that is really his opinion, he might censure Ministers for not bringing it forward sooner; but he ought, if he were consistent with himself, to accelerate that which he thinks too tardy, and to increase that which he thinks too small, instead of opposing it altogether."

"But the Hon. gentleman," so Pitt proceeded, "has been pleased to inveigh against the late administration, who, from the delays of which they were guilty, he says uniformly failed; but who, I say, notwithstanding those delays, and their uniform failures, have somehow or

other contrived, amidst the desolation of Europe, to deprive our enemies of almost all their colonial possessions—to reduce almost to annihilation their maritime strength—to deprive them of, and to appropriate to ourselves, the whole of their commerce, and to maintain in security our territories in every part of the globe. These, Sir, are the successes with which the tardy efforts of the last administration have been crowned. It is to these successes that the Hon. gentleman owes the opportunity he now makes use of to talk in this place with retrospective criticism of the conduct of the war. But I wish to ask the Hon. gentleman how we could avoid sending a force to Egypt unless we determined to give it up to France? He does not deny that it is an object of the greatest importance to this country; but he says the expedition would have been unnecessary if we had agreed to the Convention of El Arish. Sir, this subject has been discussed more than once. [Here Mr. Tyrrwhitt Jones called out 'Hear, hear!'] Sir, I beg leave to assure that Hon. gentleman that I will never interrupt any of his speeches with 'Hear, hear!' nor, if I can avoid it, will I undergo the mortification of hearing any more of his declamations upon this subject."

In this last paragraph it may be noticed that Mr. Pitt refers to the occasional relaxation which, as a private Member of Parliament, he intended henceforth to allow himself. He should not deem it necessary to attend all the trifling debates, raised by such men as Mr. Tyrrwhitt Jones, after he had lost what I remember Sir Robert Peel on a like occasion called "the inestimable

privilege of being baited, night after night, by the gentlemen opposite."

The tidings from Egypt had by this time reached England, and, like those from Denmark, had been received with much enthusiasm. The House of Commons voted a monument in St. Paul's Cathedral to Sir Ralph Abercromby, and the King bestowed a peerage and a pension on his widow. Such victories, both in the north and in the south, might well afford a chief topic to the King's Speech at the close of the Session on the 2nd of July. That Speech, however, was not delivered by the King in person. Since his illness in this year, as after his illness in 1789, he suffered severely at intervals from languor and depression. But the Lords Commissioners in his name referred to "the brilliant and repeated successes both by sea and land," which, they added, "derive particular value, in His Majesty's estimation, from their tendency to facilitate the great object of his unceasing solicitude, the restoration of peace on fair and adequate terms."

It was well understood by the public at the time that in accordance with the spirit of these words, a negotiation for peace had commenced and was carrying on between Lord Hawkesbury and M. Otto in London. Even the hope was cheering, and the reality it was thought would not be long delayed. Later in the season the people were further cheered by a blessing which in recent years had been denied them—a productive and plentiful harvest.

Mr. Pitt, at the close of his Parliamentary attendance, had retired to Walmer Castle. Both there and

in London he was greatly harassed by the state of his private affairs. He had for some years become more and more involved. Even in 1797 his debts had been estimated by Mr. Rose at between thirty and forty thousand pounds, including the two mortgages of 4000*l.* and 7000*l.* upon the estate of Holwood. But these debts had now grown in extent, and upon an accurate computation were found to be no less than 45,064*l.*[7]

It is not easy at first sight to understand or to explain such enormous liabilities. As First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer Mr. Pitt had a salary of 6000*l.* a-year. As Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports there was a further salary of 3000*l.*, besides certain small dues and rents upon the Dover coast, amounting to a few hundred pounds more. On the whole, then, since 1792 Pitt had been in the receipt of nearly 10,000*l.* a-year. He had no family to maintain. He had no expensive tastes to indulge. He had never, like Fox, frequented the gaming-table; he had not, like Windham, large election bills to pay. With common care he ought not to have spent above two-thirds of his official income.

But unhappily that common care was altogether wanting. Pitt, intent only on the national Exchequer, allowed himself no time to go through his own accounts. The consequence was that he came to be plundered without stint or mercy by some of his domestics. Once or twice during his official life he had asked his friend

[7] See the estimate as drawn out by Mr. Rose, Diaries, &c., vol. i. p. 428.

Lord Carrington to examine his household accounts. Lord Carrington subsequently told Mr. Wilberforce the results of that inquiry. He had found that the waste of the servants' hall was almost fabulous. The quantity of butchers' meat charged in the bills was nine hundred weight a week. The consumption of poultry, fish, and tea was in proportion. The charge for the servants in wages, board-wages, liveries, and bills at Holwood and in London exceeded 2300*l.* a-year.[8] Still Pitt would never give the requisite time to sift and search out such abuses. His expenses were not checked, and his debts continued to grow.

Some friends to the memory of this great Minister have judged so ill as rather to praise him for the accumulating debts, which evinced his lofty mind. No doubt that Mr. Pitt's proud disdain of money may be favourably contrasted with the unscrupulous greediness of men like Mr. Rigby. Yet surely between these two extremes there lies a more excellent way. The example of some succeeding statesmen, as the Duke of Wellington and Sir Robert Peel, may suffice to prove that the most toilsome labours in the guidance of public affairs are not inconsistent with the thrifty administration of a private fortune. Even in the busiest career some little leisure for accounts may always be secured. And upon the whole most readers will, I think, concur as I do with Lord Macaulay, where he goes on to say: "The

[8] Compare on this point Lord Macaulay's Biographies, p. 233, with a note in the Life of Wilberforce, vol. iii. p. 245, and with a passage in Rose's Diaries, vol. i. p. 402.

character of Pitt would have stood higher if, with the disinterestedness of Pericles and De Witt, he had united their dignified frugality."

So long as Mr. Pitt continued in great office his creditors were content to wait. But when they learnt that he was resigning, and that two-thirds of his present income would be lost, the impatience of some among them could no longer be restrained. The demands upon Pitt grew to be of the most pressing kind. There was reason to apprehend from day to day that an execution might be put into his house; that his rooms might be left without furniture, and his stable without horses. He determined on the sale of Holwood; but considering the heavy mortgages on that little property, its sale could only afford him on the balance a most scanty sum.

Pitt was too proud to utter a word of complaint even to his nearest friends. But they, and even, though in less degree, the public at large, soon became aware of the extremities to which he was reduced. There was a most earnest desire on their part, so far as he would allow them, to succour and relieve him. For this object three plans were at different times proposed. In the first place some gentlemen intended to bring forward a motion in the House of Commons for a public grant to him. But when Mr. Rose told Mr. Pitt of that design, "he assured me in the most solemn manner" —so Mr. Rose continues—"of his fixed resolve on no consideration whatever to accept anything from the public." "Rather than do that," added Pitt, "I would struggle with any difficulties. If, indeed, I had had

the good fortune to carry the country safe through all its dangers, and to see it in a state of prosperity, I should have had a pride in accepting such a grant. But under all the present circumstances of the country and myself, it would be utterly inconsistent with my feelings to receive anything." [9]

Next there was a renewal of the generous offer which the merchants of London had made Mr. Pitt in 1789. A deputation from them waited on him to state that they had ready subscribed for his use a sum of one hundred thousand pounds, which should be paid into any banking house which he chose, and so that he should never know the name of any one of the subscribers. This noble gift was, however, as nobly declined. If (said Mr. Pitt) he were ever again in office, he should always feel abashed and constrained when any request was addressed to him from the City, lest by non-compliance he should be thwarting the wishes of some among his unknown benefactors.[1]

The first two plans, therefore, fell to the ground. Thirdly, the King, on learning the difficulties of his late Minister, desired in the most generous and friendly spirit to remove them. Early in the summer His Majesty, on his way to Weymouth, paid a visit of some days at Cuffnells, the seat of Mr. Rose in the New Forest. There he proposed to put into the hands of Mr. Rose the sum of 30,000*l.* from his Privy

[9] Diary of Mr. Rose, March 19, 1801.

[1] Adolphus's History of England, vol. vii. p. 595. Mr. Adolphus derived his information from a great merchant who was himself present at the interview. See also Mr. Rose's speech in the House of Commons after Pitt's death, Feb. 3, 1806.

Purse for the payment of Mr. Pitt's debts; a sum, I may observe, which, with the proceeds of the sale of Holwood, would exactly have sufficed. His Majesty further expressed his wish that the affair might, if possible, be so conducted as to prevent any suspicion arising in the mind of Mr. Pitt of the quarter from whence the aid proceeded. It must be owned, I think, that this offer reflects the highest honour on both the parties concerned. But the sequel may best be related in Mr. Rose's own words: "The scheme was found to be impracticable without a communication with Mr. Pitt. On the mention of it to him he was actually more affected than I recollect to have seen him on any occasion; but he declined it, though with the deepest sense of gratitude possible. It was, indeed, one of the latest circumstances he mentioned to me, with considerable emotion, towards the close of his life."

The passage which I have here cited is derived from a letter dated so lately as December, 1809, and written to be laid before the King. The object of Mr. Rose in this recapitulation was to obtain the King's consent that His Majesty's offer might be made known to the world in a tract which Mr. Rose was about to publish. But the King, with the noble spirit which had marked his conduct in the whole affair, declared that he had never mentioned it since, and that he could not agree to its public statement, "as it would bear the appearance of making a parade of his intentions."[2]

[2] See the letter of Col. Herbert Taylor (the Secretary of George the Third on his failure of sight) in Rose's Diaries, &c., vol. ii. p. 215. It appears from this letter that in 1809 the King did not clearly recollect the exact sum which he had named.

This third most honourable offer being then, like the two first, declined, only one other course remained —that Mr. Pitt should consent to accept the contributions of some personal friends. It was the very course which Mr. Fox, under similar difficulties, had adopted some years before. At that time the transaction, amidst all the acerbities of party conflict, had provoked some strokes of satire from the Ministerial body. From these Pitt himself had not altogether refrained. The subscription for Fox had been begun without Fox's knowledge, and some one in Pitt's company was asking how Mr. Fox would take it: "Take it?" said Pitt, "why I suppose that he will take it quarterly, or perhaps it may be half-yearly!"

With such recollections Pitt must have felt double pain in resorting to the same or nearly the same expedient. But he was warmly pressed by his nearest friends, among whom on this occasion Lord Camden, Rose, and the Bishop of Lincoln took the lead. Still more pressing was the urgency of his private affairs. His final surrender, as I may term it, is described as follows:—

The Bishop of Lincoln to Mr. Rose.

"MY DEAR SIR, "Buckden Palace, Aug. 7, 1801.

"The conversation with Mr. Pitt yesterday was very short. We first examined the statement which was placed before us in Hill Street, and Mr. Pitt made some deductions and some additions in consequence of money which had been paid and debts incurred since that paper was made out. The result was more favourable by about 2000*l.*, as I thought; he thought by about 3000*l.* I then told him that

some of the creditors were extremely importunate and put to serious inconveniences by the want of the money, and that it was very much to be wished that the debts of all the common tradesmen, at least, which were to a large amount, should be immediately discharged; and, all other plans being rejected, there remained only the one which I had mentioned to him the day before — namely, the assistance of private friends. To this he expressed his readiness to accede. I then asked him whether he persisted in his determination to know the names of those friends from whom he was to receive this assistance: he answered, 'Most certainly.' I then told him that the matter had been considered, and that six of his friends, namely, Lord Camden, Steele, Rose, Long, Smith,[3] and myself, were ready to stand forward and put his affairs into such a situation immediately that he might assure himself that he would suffer no inconvenience or embarrassment from his creditors. He signified his consent without a moment's hesitation, and added there were no persons to whom he had rather owe a kindness or accommodation than those whom I had mentioned. I instantly said, 'Then I believe, Sir, we need not trouble you any further; you and J. Smith[4] can engage for the thing being done.' Thus ended the conversation. I went and told Lord Camden, who seemed perfectly satisfied with what had passed. I then returned, and sat with Mr. Pitt alone at least half an hour. He said nothing about this particular plan, but mentioned an idea of insuring his life and assigning the policy as a security for the money he borrows. I am inclined to think that this would be a better scheme than selling a part of his Cinque Ports,

[3] This is meant for Lord Carrington, as will appear from the subsequent List.

[4] Mr. Joseph Smith.

and ought perhaps to be adopted in preference to any other if he resolves to do something. I am confident he *means* to pay interest, and I think he will not be easy unless he provides some security for the principal. . . .

"Yours ever most truly,

"G. LINCOLN."

Mr. Joseph Smith, referred to in the preceding letter, was commonly called among his friends "Joe Smith." He was no relative of Robert Smith, Lord Carrington; but had been during several years Private Secretary to Mr. Pitt. Since then he had lived for the most part at his country-house near Saffron Walden, and Pitt, who continued his friend, was not unfrequently among his visitors.

I now proceed to give the List of Subscribers, not made public at the time, but as drawn up and preserved by Mr. Rose:—

CONTRIBUTORS TO THE SUM OF £.11,700 ADVANCED IN 1801.

Lord Camden		£.1000
Lord Bathurst		1000
Bishop of Lincoln		1000
Lord Carrington		1000
Mr. Steele		1000
Mr. Rose		1000
From Scotland £.4000, namely—		
Lord Melville	£.1000	
Duke of Buccleuch	1000	
Duke of Gordon	1000	
Chief Baron	1000	
		4000
Mr. Wilberforce		500
Mr. Long		500
Mr. Joseph Smith		500
Uncertain (probably from Lord Alvanley)		200
		£.11,700

By this sum, which the care of Mr. Joseph Smith applied, the most pressing claims were discharged, and the retired Minister could continue to live in comfort, but of course with a greatly reduced establishment. The sale of Holwood, although resolved upon in this year, did not take place until the next: then it was disposed of by auction, the purchaser being Sir George Pocock, and the price 15,000*l.* Deducting the two mortgages, therefore, this sale left a balance of 4000*l.* at the disposal of Pitt.

To part with Holwood, so long his favourite retreat, must have been to Pitt a bitter pang. I have not found a word of complaint upon the subject in any of his letters that are preserved, or in any of his conversation that is recorded. But he once said to his friend Lord Bathurst: "When a boy I used to go a bird-nesting in the woods of Holwood, and it was always my wish to call it my own." [5]

From Sir George Pocock the estate of Holwood passed ere long to other hands; and some twenty years later the house of Pitt was pulled down. There is, I believe, no trace of him in the modern mansion except only the writing-table that he used. But in the domain "the Pitt Oak" still marks a spot where he often sat; and "the Wilberforce Oak" remains as a record of his own, conjointly with another's, fame.[6]

During this summer the military operations were continued. The French had been threatening an invasion from several of their ports, and above all from Boulogne; and Nelson, who had now succeeded to the

[5] Rogers's Recollections, note at page 189, as derived from Lord Bathurst himself.

[6] See vol. i. p. 368.

home command, directed an attack upon the flotilla at that place. But so strong were the defences that the enterprise had little success. In the Peninsula, Portugal succumbed to the superior force of Spain and France, and subscribed an ignominious treaty, consenting to renounce her British alliance and to close her ports to British ships. In requital, and for the protection of our trade, the island of Madeira was secured, with the joyful assent of its inhabitants, by a British force under Colonel Clinton, son of *the* Sir Henry, of American renown.

In Egypt the losses of the French grew to be decisive. On the 16th of May the Grand Vizier defeated one division of their army under General Belliard, by dint of his far superior numbers. Then combining with General Hutchinson, the two chiefs proceeded to the investment of Cairo, and compelled General Belliard to surrender before the close of June. Immediately afterwards General Hutchinson was joined by the expected force from India, which had sailed into the Red Sea and marched across the desert from Cosseir; it was a body of seven thousand men, commanded by General Baird. Thus strengthened, General Hutchinson was able to besiege the remaining French in Alexandria. The place ere long was closely pressed. On the 27th of August General Menou losing all hope of relief from France, and having lost already the confidence of his own men, requested a capitulation. He obtained the same honourable terms as had General Belliard at Cairo. The French were not to be considered as prisoners of war, but to be embarked with their arms, artillery, and baggage, and set free upon the shores of France. And thus was Egypt reconquered from its martial invaders, to the

just renown both of British counsels and of British arms.

Meanwhile the negotiation for peace was pursuing between Lord Hawkesbury and Monsieur Otto. Whenever Mr. Pitt passed through London on his way to or from Buckden Palace, or Burton Pynsent, or any other country visit, his advice on the points at issue appears to have been most anxiously sought and most frankly given. Towards the close of September indeed, when Pitt was fixed in Park Place, it may be said that he took into his own hands the chief control of this most responsible negotiation. At last, on the 1st of October, the Preliminary Articles were signed, and Pitt wrote to many of his friends to give them the important news. Here are two of his letters:—

Mr. Pitt to Mr. Long.

"DEAR LONG, "Park Place, Oct. 1, 1801.

"I have but one moment to tell you that the die is at length cast, and the preliminaries are just signed.

"The signature will not be announced to the public till to-morrow morning.

"The terms, though not in every point precisely all that one could wish, are certainly highly creditable, and on the whole very advantageous.

"I do not expect all our friends to be completely satisfied, but the country at large will, I think, be very much so; and I consider the event as fortunate both for the Government and for the public. I hope now in a very few days to come to you.

"Ever sincerely yours,

"W. P.

"Hiley would have written to you, but knows that I do."

Mr. Pitt to Lord Mulgrave.

"DEAR MULGRAVE, "Park Place (Oct. 2, 1801).

"You would learn from to-day's 'Gazette' that our long suspense is at length terminated, and that preliminaries of peace were signed yesterday evening. As you will naturally be anxious to know the terms, I enclose a short statement of all that are material; they will of course not be published at length till after the ratification. I cannot help regretting the Cape of Good Hope, though I know many great authorities do not attach to it the same importance that I do. In other respects I think the treaty very advantageous, and on the whole satisfactory; and the stipulations in favour of our Allies are peculiarly creditable. I shall be very happy to find that it strikes you in the same view.

"Ever sincerely yours,

"W. PITT."

A few notes by Lord Malmesbury at this time throw some further light on the political scene. "Sept. 29. After an absence of three months, I came for a few days to London. On getting out of my carriage in St. James's Park, I met Mr. Addington, the Minister; he was in uncommon high spirits, from which I readily inferred that the peace negotiation was likely to terminate successfully. . . . Windham came in the evening full of apprehensions.—Sept. 30. Great secrecy in the Cabinet as to peace. . . . Lord Granville Leveson averse.—Oct. 1. Windham in morning and evening; quite in despair. The preliminaries were, I believe, settled this evening conclusively. Pitt counselled, and of course directed, the whole."

How different, I may observe, the real conduct of Pitt from that which some of his opponents have imputed to him! They have alleged that his secret motive for throwing up the Premiership was his unwillingness to grant the hard terms of peace that would now be requisite. Yet if that motive had weighed at all in Pitt's mind, nothing could have been easier for him than when he retired from office to keep aloof from the negotiation. Far from this, as we have seen, he was willing to direct and advise the conditions of the treaty. If it became unpopular, he was thus bound at all hazard to defend it. If, on the contrary, it became popular, he must have foreseen that the public would of course, as was just, assign the praise, not to him, but to the ostensible and responsible servants of the Crown. In no case could he be a personal gainer by the course which he pursued; and it was a course that nothing but a high sense of public duty impelled.

The Preliminary Articles, as signed on the 1st of October, involved very large concessions on the part of England. We restored to France and to the allies of France, namely Spain and Holland, all the colonies or islands which we had occupied or conquered in the course of the war, excepting only Trinidad and the Dutch possessions in Ceylon. The Cape of Good Hope was to be open to the commerce of both contracting parties. Malta was to be evacuated by the British troops and restored to the Order of St. John. To secure its future independence it was to be placed under the guarantee and protection of a third Power, to be agreed on in the definitive treaty. Egypt was to be restored to

the "Sublime Porte," Portugal was to be preserved entire. The French forces were to relinquish the kingdom of Naples and the Roman territory, and the English forces Porto Ferrajo. The Republic of the Seven Islands was acknowledged by France; the fisheries on the coast of Newfoundland and in the Gulf of St. Lawrence were restored to the same footing on which they stood before the war. The prisoners made respectively were to be restored without ransom on the conclusion of the definitive treaty; and to negotiate that treaty, plenipotentiaries were to be named on each side, and to meet at Amiens.

With respect to the choice of the plenipotentiary, there was no hesitation on the part of the British Ministers. They at once summoned Lord Cornwallis from Suffolk, and induced him to undertake the post. So lately as the 5th of September his Lordship had ventured on a prediction. "I confess that I see no prospect of peace." And he had added, "I am myself out of sorts, low-spirited, and tired of everything."[7] But with his new employment his former spirits returned. On the other part, the First Consul determined to send to Amiens his eldest brother, Joseph.

The tidings of the peace were hailed with joy and delight both in France and England. Both nations had sustained heavy losses. Both were weighed down by grievous burthens, and both indulged a happy vision of repose. Amongst ourselves the terms that had been found requisite to obtain that object were in general

[7] Letter to General Ross, Cornwallis Corresp., vol. iii. p. 382.

fully approved. The amount of the restitutions that we made was indeed very large. To give back the Cape of Good Hope especially, after some years' possession of that half-way house to India, seemed a great sacrifice. But, on the other hand, it was felt that we had been left without a single ally on the continent of Europe, and that, were we to continue the contest, General Bonaparte would be found no ordinary foe. "It is a peace," said the author of 'Junius,' "which everybody is glad of, though nobody is proud of."

The state of public feeling, in the capital at least, was strongly manifested when, on the 10th of October, General Lauriston, an aide-de-camp of the First Consul, arrived at St. James's with the ratification of the Preliminary Articles. A large multitude with loud cheers escorted the General's carriage; they took off the horses, and drew him in triumph through several streets.[8] On that night and on the following there was a general illumination. Nor were such tokens of joy confined to London; they are recorded also of many other towns. "Ramsgate was illuminated last night, and Deal is to make its shining display to-morrow;" so writes Mrs. Elizabeth Carter from the Kentish coast.[9]

A few statesmen, however, were adverse to the peace. No sooner was Lord Grenville apprised of the exact terms, than he wrote to Mr. Addington announcing his fixed determination to oppose them and him whenever Parliament should meet. Lord Spencer and Lord Buckingham followed in the wake of Lord Grenville; and

[8] Ann. Regist. 1801, second part, p. 33.

[9] Life of Lord Sidmouth, by Dean Pellew, vol. i. p. 456.

Windham had been from the first vehement upon the same side. Here then was laid the ground-work of a new Opposition, very small indeed as to numbers, but by no means insignificant, considering the ability of its chiefs.

Fox at this time agreed neither with Grenville and Windham, nor yet with the public at large. He had been all through a warm admirer of the French Revolution. Writing to his nephew in 1795, we find him go the length of declaring that, "for the general good, considering the diabolical principle of the present war, even the government of Robespierre, or a worse, if worse can be, is better than the restoration of the Bourbons."[1] With such sentiments, Mr. Fox had ceased to feel any pain in the reverses of his countrymen. On the contrary, he almost gloried in them.

It so chanced that on Saturday the 10th of October there was a crowded meeting at the Shakespeare Tavern to celebrate the anniversary of Fox's first election for Westminster. There the great orator delivered a long and able speech. He adverted to the resignation of Pitt at the commencement of the year, reviving the aspersions upon it which Lord Auckland had thrown out. "From circumstances," he said, "which seem very mysterious, and which I, for one, most certainly do not in any degree understand, a change of Ministry at last took place. I rejoiced at the event, though I was ignorant of its cause. While those men who began the war remained in power, not a hope could be reasonably enter-

[1] Memorials and Correspondence, vol. iii. p. 107.

tained that it would terminate before our ruin was consummated. The downfall of Ministry I therefore hailed as the happy omen of peace. I have not been mistaken, and peace by that means is obtained. My opinion of those who succeeded, you may believe, was not high; but in abandoning the mad schemes of their predecessors, they have so far done well, and merit approbation. It may be said that the peace we have made is glorious to the French Republic, and glorious to the Chief Consul. Ought it not to be so?—Ought not glory to be the reward of such a glorious struggle? France stood against a confederacy composed of all the great kingdoms of Europe; she completely baffled the attempts of those who menaced her independence. . . . . Some complain that we have not gained the object of the war. The object of the war we have not gained most certainly, and I like the peace by so much the better."[2]

These expressions may be deemed sufficiently strong. But much stronger yet were Fox's sentiments in private. When, a few days afterwards, Grey wrote to him, and ventured to call him "indiscreet," Fox thus replied: "The truth is, I am gone something further in hate to the English Government than you and the rest of my friends are, and certainly further than can with prudence be avowed. The triumph of the French Government over the English does in fact afford me a degree of pleasure which it is very difficult to disguise."[3]

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[2] Report in the *Morning Chronicle*, Monday, October 12, 1801.

[3] Letter to Mr. Grey, October 22, 1801, as published by Lord John Russell.

CHAPTER XXXII.

1801 — 1802.

Opening of Parliament — Debates on the Peace — Abbot elected Speaker — Cabinet office declined by Grey — Overtures of Erskine — Temporary estrangement between Pitt and Addington — Negotiation at Amiens — Treaty concluded — The Budget — Vote of Thanks to Pitt — Dinner in celebration of his birthday — "The Pilot that weathered the Storm" — Dissolution of Parliament — General Election — Popularity of the Peace — Lord Castlereagh President of the Board of Control — Death of Barré — Fox and Erskine at Paris — Pitt at Walmer — His illness — Visited by Canning and Grenville.

SOON after the signature of the Preliminaries, Mr. Pitt set off for Walmer Castle; but he returned to town two or three days before the meeting of Parliament, which was fixed for the 29th of October. His mind was at that time intent on the financial schemes which must result from the conclusion of peace, as the following note will show.

Mr. Pitt to Mr. Rose.

"DEAR ROSE, "Park Place, Oct. 26, 1801.

"I received your letter yesterday morning, just as I was setting out from Walmer. All the sentiments it states are precisely those which I feel, and in which, I think, all moderate and dispassionate men will concur; but I fear there are some of our friends who will not be

found to be of that number. I am very glad that you have determined to come up, and, if it will really be no inconvenience to you to be in town on Wednesday, I shall be much obliged to you, as there are many points connected with finance on which I wish much to converse with you, and on which I have some large projects in my mind.

"Ever sincerely yours,

"W. PITT."

Parliament was opened by the King in person. His Majesty announced in due form both the pacification with the Northern Powers, and the preliminaries of a treaty with France. This last arrangement would, he said, manifest the justice and moderation of his views, and would also, as he trusted, be found conducive to the interest of his subjects. Very little debate ensued on this first evening. In the Lords there was only the Duke of Bedford, besides the mover and the seconder of the Address. In the Commons the speakers were many, but the speeches short. Every one desired to reserve himself for a fuller discussion on a future day. Mr. Fox said that, whatever difference there might be as to the terms of peace, or the manner of concluding it, he most cordially joined in the general joy and exultation to which it had given rise. Mr. Pitt, who rose next, spoke much to the same effect. "I see both these treaties," he said, "upon the whole with great satisfaction. Whatever criticism may be applied to inferior parts of these great transactions, they are on the whole such as afford great joy to the country, and entitle the Government which concluded them to esteem and thanks."

Nor could Mr. Windham, who followed, altogether refrain from urging his extreme—may we not venture to call them extravagant?—opinions. "Sir, I speak from the bottom of my heart and with the solemnity of a death-bed declaration (a situation much resembling that in which we all stand), when I declare that my hon. friends who, in a moment of rashness and weakness, fatally put their hands to this treaty, have signed the death-warrant of their country. They have given it a blow under which it may languish for a few years, but from which I do not conceive how it is possible for it ever to recover."

On the 3rd of November there was moved in both Houses an Address to the King in approval of the peace. Among the Peers, Lord Grenville stated his objections fully and forcibly, as did also Lords Spencer and Fitzwilliam in few words. But on dividing, there were only 10 votes against 114. In the Commons, Mr. Windham was prevented by indisposition from attending, but next day, on the Report, he delivered a most ingenious and eloquent speech. So adverse was, however, the feeling of the House, that with all the boldness of Windham, he wisely forbore to call for a division.

In the debate upon the 3rd both Pitt and Fox spoke in full detail, expressing, though on separate grounds, their approval of the peace. "For my own part," said Mr. Pitt, "I have no hesitation to declare that I would rather close with an enemy upon terms short even of the fair pretensions of the country, provided they were not inconsistent with honour and security, than continue the contest for any particular possession. . . . . .

With respect to the island of Minorca, I entirely concur in the opinion of my Noble Friend (Lord Hawkesbury) that it will always belong to the Power which possesses the greatest maritime strength. The experience of the last four wars proves the justice of this observation. . . . . I cannot help expressing my regret that circumstances were such as to prevent us from retaining a place so important in many points of view as the island of Malta. . . . . But would the acquisition of all these islands have enabled us to counterbalance the power which France has acquired on the Continent? They would only give us a little more wealth; but a little more wealth would be badly purchased by a little more war."

"We have at least"—so in a different part of his speech Mr. Pitt proceeded—"we have the satisfaction of knowing that we have survived the violence of the revolutionary fever, and that we have seen the extent of its principles abated. We have seen Jacobinism deprived of its fascination; we have seen it stripped of the name and pretence of liberty. It has shown itself to be capable only of destroying, not of building, and with a military despotism as its necessary end. I trust this important lesson will not be thrown away upon the world."

The two Houses continued to sit until the 15th of December. They had not, however, much business before them after their approval of the peace; and the popularity of that peace was now giving strength to the new administration. Thus on the 1st of the month does Wilberforce describe the scene: "Opposition is

melting away manifestly. Grey gone out of town. Tierney has declared himself friendly. Erskine and Lord Moira ditto. Only Fox and Sheridan still where they were. . . . Pitt supports most magnanimously, and assists in every way. Addington goes on well, is honest and respectable, and improves in speaking. Little or nothing to do in the House."

At this time, however, Wilberforce was intent on renewing, with better hopes since the pacification, his onset on the Slave Trade. We may learn from his own letters, and it is very remarkable, that Pitt was the person who first devised that scheme of Slave Trade treaties on which his successors acted. For thus writes Wilberforce to Addington: "Whenever we do abolish for ourselves and alone, we leave our share of the Trade to be seized on by other countries; and though we shall have then done our duty, however tardily, the benefit to Africa will be infinitely less than if all the European Powers were to abolish by common consent, and agree to set on foot—an idea of Pitt's, I think—a judicious system for repairing the wrongs and promoting the civilization of that much-injured continent."[1]

Two other letters of this period which I here subjoin will explain themselves.

The Bishop of Lincoln to Mr. Rose.

"Deanery, St. Paul's,
Dec. 23, 1801.

"MY DEAR SIR,

"I remained in town till the 14th, and then went with Mr. Pitt to Cambridge. On the 16th, after

[1] Life by his Sons, vol. iii. p. 32.

dining at a great feast in Trinity College Hall, we went to Buckden, and he left us on the 19th. I did not receive your very interesting letter till I reached Buckden; and the short time I was there I was so occupied by company and business (having an Ordination on the 20th), that I really had not leisure to write to you. I set out from Buckden yesterday, and came hither this morning. I saw very little of Mr. Pitt while I was in town. He was a day or two at Lord Hawkesbury's, and then he went to Holwood. When he was in town he was engaged every day to dinner. I scarcely know why, but I could not bring myself to enter upon any of those important subjects on which I knew I should differ from him as we went along in the carriage; and I felt almost an equal reluctance when he was at Buckden. However, in the last walk we took on Friday, we fell insensibly into politics, and he talked with his usual openness and good temper. I expressed very decidedly my opinion concerning the insufficiency of the present administration, especially upon subjects of finance, and reprobated the dangerous tendency of that spirit of candour and conciliation which had hitherto marked his conduct to Mr. A. I endeavoured to prove to him that he would materially injure his own character if he continued upon his present intimate footing with Mr. A., and if he abstained from declaring his opinion upon the measures which he really disapproved. I told him that such a line of conduct appeared to me a betrayal of the interests of his country. I mentioned the pains which had been taken, and which were still continued, to lower him in the estimation of the public; and I ventured to say that his present conduct was precisely what his enemies wished and his friends could not approve.

"I am willing to think that I made some impression

upon him. He owned that the opening of the distilleries was 'perfectly absurd.' He said that if the peace establishment should not be settled as he wished, or that one or two certain measures of finance should not be adopted, he would certainly declare his opinion in Parliament. He seemed to think it not impossible but this opportunity might be afforded him.

"Upon the Catholic question our conversation was less satisfactory. He certainly looks forward to the time when he may carry that point; and I fear he does not wish to take office again unless he could be permitted to bring it forward, and to be properly supported. I endeavoured to convince him that he had been deceived by those on whom he relied on this question, as far as Ireland itself was concerned, and that the measure would be very unpopular in England. I did not seem to make much impression upon this point, but I had not time to say all I wished and could have said. I thought it better not to touch upon the treacherous part of a certain person's character and conduct. That point had been fully urged by you, and I had no new matter to state. It appeared to me wiser to argue upon public grounds, and upon regard and concern for his own character.

"He was certainly not in so good spirits after this conversation, and he remained some time in his room doing nothing immediately after it, although he knew that a large party from Cambridge was waiting for him in the drawing-room. I am confident that he is not perfectly easy in his own mind about public matters, and I am satisfied that his uneasiness will increase.

. . . . . .

"Yours most cordially, &c.,

"G. LINCOLN."

Mr. Pitt to Lady Chatham.

"My dear Mother, "Park Place, Jan. 5, 1802.

"I had fixed my plan for setting out to Burton this morning, and was at last flattering myself with the immediate prospect of having the comfort and happiness of seeing you; but the very severe weather, and the difficulty of the roads from the alternate succession of frost and thaw, added to a winter cold which I have had for some days, has obliged me again to defer it. From the very unpromising appearance of to-day, I begin to fear that there is but a slight chance of a favourable change early enough in the week to leave me time for accomplishing my purpose, and returning for the Birth-day, which I cannot with any propriety avoid. I will not, however, quite relinquish the hope till the last moment. Even in that case, I trust the additional interval will be a very short one before I can resume my place, as I very much flatter myself that after the first weeks of the Session there can be very little business of a sort to make it at all material for me to attend, and in that case I shall be able to perform my journey with less chance of interruption, and I hope with my time less limited than it would be at present. The frost has not, I hope, made itself felt in the west as much as here, or that at least you have not felt the effects of it. Have the goodness to give my love to my niece, and my kind and affectionate remembrance to Mrs. Stapleton. If I am not enabled to set out, I will write again in a day or two.

"Ever, my dear Mother, &c.,

"W. Pitt."

In the course of January the Prime Minister was enabled to show his cordial feelings towards his prede-

cessor by calling to the honour of a seat at the Privy Council Mr. Pitt's two most intimate friends, Mr. Rose and Mr. Long. At the same time Mr. Wickham, who had been in the closest intimacy with Lord Grenville, was admitted to the same distinction, and shortly afterwards was appointed to the more substantial office of Secretary for Ireland.

From the 15th of December Parliament had been adjourned from time to time until the 2nd of February. On that day business was resumed, and almost the first business was to choose a Speaker; for the Earl of Clare having died, Sir John Mitford was appointed Chancellor of Ireland with a peerage as Lord Redesdale. Addington recommended his friend Charles Abbot to the vacant Chair, and Mr. Abbot was accordingly elected.

Other business proceeded. There was a Message from the King announcing a new debt upon the Civil List, which was subsequently found to amount to little less than one million sterling. There were also some large extraordinaries to defray, incurred in winding up the war in Egypt and the West Indies, and amounting to nearly two millions. There was a further vote to the same amount towards the reduction of the Navy Debt. In these and the like measures, through the remainder of the Session, the Government prevailed with great ease. As a passage from Wilberforce's Diary has already shown my readers, the members of the old Opposition no longer cohered. Some were beginning to come over, and Addington had hopes of more.

Already in the summer Addington had conferred an

English Barony on General Sir Charles Grey. The main object was, no doubt, to reward a gallant veteran, but there might also be the hope to conciliate a rising orator. Mr. Grey was, however, far from pleased at his father's elevation. It might at an early period call him from the sphere in which he shone; and a peerage is but a poor exchange for a commanding position in the House of Commons.

In the winter, nevertheless, Mr. Addington ventured on a second step, and made a direct offer of a Cabinet office to Mr. Grey. It was declined, so far as I can trace, mainly on the ground that the Ministry could not accede to any measure of Parliamentary Reform.[2]

On the other hand there were some persons willing not only to accept, but even to make an overture. Forward among these was Mr. Erskine. There is on record a letter from him, which Dean Pellew has published.[3] In it he expresses first his admiration of the Prime Minister, and next his hope of one of those stations, as he says, "which my birth and acquired place render fit for me." He was looking, it would seem, to the office of Attorney-General.[4] I do not know that Erskine was bound to continue his party ties with Fox. I do not know that he is to be blamed for seeking to connect himself with Addington. But I cannot ex-

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[2] This offer was not known to Dean Pellew as the biographer of Addington. But subsequently it has peeped out both in the Fox Memorials (vol. iii. p. 351 and 357) and the Buckingham Papers (vol. iii. p. 181).

[3] It is dated Dec. 28, 1801. Life of Lord Sidmouth, vol. i. p. 476.

[4] Lord Campbell's Lives of the Chancellors, vol. vi. p. 537.

cuse the barrister of well-won renown who puts forward his noble birth as a claim to professional advancement.

Mr. Tierney also, and at a later period Mr. Sheridan, though without, so far as I know, any application on their part for office, showed in several debates a favourable disposition to the Government. Their support, or even their good will, was of great value. But it had one countervailing inconvenience. To explain their cessation or diminution of hostility, they found it requisite to draw a parallel between the late administration and the present, greatly to the disadvantage of the former. So early as the 8th of February, in a debate upon the Army Extraordinaries, Mr. Tierney took occasion to inveigh against Mr. Pitt, then absent at Walmer Castle. He accused him of "too loose an expenditure of the public money;" of "neglect in the superintendence of expeditions;" and of "remissness in the inspection of accounts." "He must further blame," he said, "the late Chancellor of the Exchequer, whom he regretted not to see in his place, for holding back so many charges until the peace, by which means he had thrown a burthen upon his successor, who had now the odium of applying for four or five millions of money to provide for expenses which his predecessor had incurred. I have not," he added, "the delicacy of the Right Hon. gentleman, which restrains him from complaining of such conduct. I say he has been hardly and cruelly used."

At the close of this attack, Mr. Steele immediately rose in defence, as he said, of his absent friend, who had designedly kept nothing back, and who had not found

it necessary to make such an application to Parliament as the present, because there had been no exceeding in his accounts, his estimates having nearly coincided with the expenses. To the same effect, with the aid of facts and figures, spoke also Mr. William Dundas. But Addington, who rose next, did no more than in a single sentence express his denial of the charge. He had already taken part in the debate, and this may have been one reason for his brevity. He may likewise have thought Pitt in no need of further defence. Since, however, Addington was at all times by no means insensible to personal compliments, he may also have been a little slow in disavowing and repelling those which Tierney had paid him.

At all events Pitt was greatly chafed. He wrote at once to the Prime Minister in the following terms:—

"My dear Sir, "Walmer Castle, Feb. 10, 1802.

"You will not wonder if the account which has reached me this morning, of Monday's debate, has engaged not a little of my attention. I know how little newspapers can be trusted for the exactness of their reports; and I therefore do not allow their statement to make its full impression, but wait for more correct information. But if the substance of what passed is anything like what is represented, I should not deal honestly if I did not take the first moment to own to you that I think I have much to wonder at, and to complain of, and that what is due to my own character will not suffer me to leave the matter without further explanation. I hope I have never been captious, and I am sure I can never suffer my public opinions to be influenced by personal feelings; but there may be

attacks under which, from the mode of their being received rather than of their being made, it may be impossible to acquiesce. I heartily wish I may find this impression mistaken; but feeling it as I do, I have thought that to state it distinctly is the part of one who has long been, and wishes ever to remain,

"affectionately yours,

"W. PITT."

Here were certainly grounds for strong alarm to Mr. Addington.

"Quam timeo victus ne pœnas exiget Ajax,
Ut male defensus!"

And the reply of the Minister was as follows:—

"MY DEAR SIR, "Downing Street, Feb. 11, 1802.

"Your letter is a severe addition to the trials which it has been my lot to undergo. I trust, however, that I shall not be found unequal to any accumulation of them which it may please God to permit. It will be to Steele only that I shall communicate your letter. I shall do so without comment, and shall only request that he will abstain from letting me know his sentiments on the occasion of it till he has stated them to you. I will not describe any of the feelings which possess me at this moment: it is, however, a support and consolation to me to know that I have ever been and ever proved myself

"affectionately and unalterably yours,

"HENRY ADDINGTON."

On coming up to town, however, and receiving the promised explanations from Steele and also from Long,

Pitt declared himself satisfied. He assured Addington that he should dismiss every disagreeable reflection from his mind, and in his last note offered to walk or ride with him on the following day, as might suit him best. Addington, on his part, was as sincerely cordial. Yet still one cloud, though since passed away, had now arisen between them, and might be the precursor of more.

While thus, as in the cases of Erskine and Tierney, Fox had to regret the political estrangement, at least in some degree, of several friends, he lost another by death. This was Francis Duke of Bedford. The Duke was not quite thirty-seven years of age, yet had already attained considerable distinction in the House of Lords. Fox undertook the duty of moving a new Writ for Tavistock in the place of Lord John Russell, who succeeded his brother in the Dukedom; and on this occasion he delivered an eloquent and glowing panegyric on his departed friend. A few days afterwards he sent this *Oraison Funèbre* (as it may be termed) to the 'Monthly Magazine,' observing to the Editor that he had never before attempted to make a copy of any speech which he had delivered in public.[5] The report, in Mr. Fox's own handwriting, is still preserved, where I have been shown it, in the library at Woburn.

At nearly the same period there ensued the death of Lord Kenyon. Sir Edward Law, an excellent lawyer, and a man of most vigorous intellect, was

[5] Note to Parl. Hist., vol. xxxvi. p. 365.

appointed Chief Justice in his place. Mr. Perceval became—from Solicitor—Attorney-General, while the office of Solicitor was bestowed on Mr. Manners Sutton, afterwards Lord Manners.

Meanwhile Lord Cornwallis on the Continent was pursuing his negotiations. He had gone, in the first instance, to Paris and was presented to the First Consul, "who," says Lord Cornwallis, "was gracious to the highest degree."[6] Next he repaired to Amiens and began his conferences with Joseph Bonaparte. They were afterwards joined by the Ministers from the Batavian Republic and from Spain, who added not a little to the difficulties of the negotiation.

Into these difficulties I do not propose to enter in detail. It was natural that the Ministers in England should regard with jealousy the ambitious designs which General Bonaparte was at no pains to conceal. He sent out a formidable expedition to attempt the reconquest of St. Domingo; he accepted the Presidency which was tendered him of the Cisalpine Republic, changing at the same time its name to the Italian; and thus, besides the indication of his ulterior projects, he centered in his single hands the sovereign power both of France and Lombardy. Against such steps, though hazarded before the conclusion of a peace, it was not easy for the British Government to protest; but, viewed by this light, the new demands put forth at Amiens were still less to be approved.

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[6] Cornwallis Corresp., vol. iii. p. 390. In another private letter Lord Cornwallis adds, "He is quick, animated, *et il parle en Roi.*"

The pretensions of Joseph Bonaparte tending to unsettle several points which the Preliminary Articles had already in fact decided, were strenuously and at last successfully opposed by Lord Cornwallis. Malta was, however, from the first the point upon which the main controversies turned. The English Government had agreed to give up the island, but desired to frame such an arrangement as would prevent its being on the first opportunity recovered by the French. It was no easy matter to find any guaranteeing State with so much power as to afford the requisite protection, and yet with so little as to raise no ground of jealousy. Spain, Naples, and Russia were in turn suggested and refused; but after much negotiation another expedient was devised. It was agreed that the island of Malta, with its small dependencies Gozo and Comino, should be restored to the Order of St. John, to be held on the same conditions as before the war, but subject to some new stipulations. The British forces were to evacuate the islands within three months from the exchange of the ratifications, or sooner if possible, provided that the Grand Master, or Commissioners fully authorised by him, were at Malta to receive possession, and provided also there had then arrived a force of two thousand men which was to be supplied by the King of Naples and to serve as a garrison during the first year. The guarantee of the principal Powers of Europe was stipulated, and the neutrality for all times to come of the Order and of the islands was declared.

With this arrangement as to Malta, and with a renewal of the other stipulations defined in the

Preliminary Articles, the Treaty of Peace between England on the one part, and France, Spain, and Holland on the other, was finally concluded at Amiens on the 27th of March, 1802.

No sooner were the terms of the Treaty known than Lord Grenville and Mr. Windham renewed their attacks in Parliament: they produced, however, very little effect. Without any disparagement to the great ability of either statesman, it may be said that here the common sense of the country was against them. It was not difficult for these objectors to point out some concessions which it had been painful to make, or some dangers which it might be reasonable to foresee. But still the practical question remained—was it not wiser to make peace on the best conditions that could be obtained rather than persevere single-handed in an almost hopeless contest? On this ground Mr. Pitt continued to give his steady support to the administration. On this ground Lord Grenville, when he ventured to divide in the House of Lords, found himself again defeated by overwhelming numbers—122 votes against 16; and in the Commons the majority was much greater still. The Address moved by Mr. Windham was rejected by 276 against 20.

In conversation at this time with Lord Malmesbury, Mr. Pitt observed of Windham, "Nothing can be so well-meaning or so eloquent as he is: his speeches are the finest productions possible—of warm imagination and fancy. Yet still I must condemn such parts of them as hold out the French nation as the first in point of military and political abilities, and therefore

deservedly the first in Europe. This part of it is a language I strongly reprobate as not correct, and as unbecoming the mouth of any Englishman."[7]

Peace being thus attained, Finance was the next object. Mr. Addington brought forward his Budget on the 5th of April. He proposed a considerable and immediate remission of taxes to the people: he at once repealed the Income Tax, which produced at this time not quite six millions a year, and he added to the Three per Cents above fifty-six millions of unfunded debt. This sum, added to the loan of the year of twenty-three millions, made ninety-seven millions, which vast sum accordingly Mr. Addington, by a very bold resolution, added to the capital stock in a single year. "Mr. Pitt was consulted with respect to these arrangements, and fully approved them all." So writes Mr. Vansittart, who was at that time Secretary of the Treasury.[8]

Two other debates of this period excited some attention, not so much by their importance as from the personal attacks which they involved. On the 12th of April Sir Francis Burdett moved for a Committee of the whole House to inquire into the conduct of the late administration. In a speech of considerable length he inveighed especially against Pitt, and arraigned with much bitterness the entire course of the war. "I demand inquiry," he said, "in order that punishment should follow guilt, as an example to Ministers hereafter."

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[7] Diaries of Lord Malmesbury, vol. iv. p. 66.

[8] Notes inserted in the Life of Lord Sidmouth, vol. ii. p. 61.

It may well be supposed that this attack was very offensive to the large majority of Members who had supported Mr. Pitt in all his measures. Lord Belgrave became the mouth-piece of their indignation. He moved an amendment, that, on the contrary, the thanks of the House should be given to the late Ministers for their wise and salutary conduct throughout the war. The Opposition cried out that such an amendment was contrary to the forms of Parliament; but the Speaker decided that it was regular, though very unusual, and that it might be put.

But here Pitt rose. In his loftiest tone he said that he would not offer one word on the original motion, but he hoped he might be allowed to suggest that the amendment was certainly, for want of notice, against the general course of proceeding in the House, and that it ought to be withdrawn. Lord Belgrave did accordingly withdraw it, and, after some further debate, the House divided. Then the motion of Sir Francis was rejected by an immense majority; there being for it 39 Members, but against it 246. Upon this, Lord Belgrave gave notice that he would, after the Recess, bring forward a vote of thanks to the late administration.

It was probably to anticipate this motion that a second attack was made. The assailant was now Mr. John Nicholls, and the time the 7th of May. The speech of Mr. Nicholls was, as usual with that gentleman's speeches, very coarse, and, though coarse, very flimsy. Thus, for instance, did Mr. Nicholls describe Pitt's resignation: "When he finds himself no longer able to continue in office, he throws out lures, hopes, and

temptations to a very numerous and respectable body of His Majesty's subjects to look up to him as their only chance of redress. 'He endeavours to set the whole Catholic body in motion, and to alienate their affections from their Sovereign. This, Sir, I maintain, is criminality of the deepest dye, and the atrocity of which rests entirely with himself." As a logical deduction from premises like these, Mr. Nicholls concluded by moving an Address of Thanks to His Majesty "for having been pleased to remove the Right Hon. William Pitt from his councils."

This motion, like that of Sir Francis Burdett, was seconded by Mr. Tyrrwhitt Jones. Then up got Lord Belgrave. He pointed out that the foundation of the proposed Address was entirely false. The King had not dismissed Mr. Pitt. That Minister had of himself resigned his post. The consequence, therefore, of agreeing to this vote would be, that the House of Commons would thank the King for doing what the King had not done!

But Lord Belgrave had other and no less weighty objections, such as in the first debate he had already urged. These he stated again, and wound up by moving as an amendment the Resolution of which he had given notice, expressing the opinion of the House in favour of the wisdom, energy, and firmness of His Majesty's councils during the late arduous contest.

Pitt himself took no part in the discussion. He was not even present at it. But the members of the old Opposition felt that an approval of the late Ministers involved in some degree a censure of themselves; they

therefore strained every nerve against Lord Belgrave's Resolution. First, they said that in regular form it could not be put as an amendment. Next, when the Speaker had ruled that point against them, vehement harangues, resisting the motion on its merits, were delivered by Grey and Erskine, by Fox and Tierney. On the other hand, not only Wilberforce and Sir Robert Peel, as independent men, but also Lord Hawkesbury and Addington, spoke strongly in its support. And, finally, the Resolution was adopted by overwhelming numbers—222 Yeas, and but 52 Nays.

This triumphant vote did not suffice to Mr. Pitt's friends. Sir Henry Mildmay immediately started up, and moved a second Resolution, as direct in its praise as had been Mr. Nicholls's in its condemnation. It was a Vote of Thanks to Mr. Pitt by name. The Opposition were in sore dismay. They had not strength sufficient for direct resistance, and so they endeavoured to parry this home-thrust by a side-blow. Mr. Fox proposed as an amendment, to include the names of Lord Grenville, Lord Spencer, and others, who had been Mr. Pitt's colleagues in the conduct of the war. But the majority of the House was not thus to be turned aside from its object. "I cannot think," said Mr. Thomas Grenville, "that this amendment is seriously meant as a mark of respect to my Noble Relative." And, without any division, the amendment was rejected.

Mr. Grey now came forward with a second proposal. It was to limit the Vote of Thanks to a single subject, through an addition of this phrase, "by which the present Government has been enabled to conclude a safe,

honourable, and glorious peace." That amendment also passed in the negative. And then the House, proceeding to vote upon the main question, carried by overwhelming numbers, and against the same minority of fifty-two, the following words: "That the Right Hon. William Pitt has rendered great and important services to his country, and especially deserves the gratitude of this House." After this last vote, and at six in the morning, the House adjourned.

It was in this manner, through steps which the ill-judged animosity of his enemies provoked, and which his friends of themselves would never have proposed, that Mr. Pitt in his private station received a most signal mark of the public gratitude—an honour to which, under all its circumstances, it is not easy to find an adequate parallel in our own history or in any other.

Before the close of the same month the friends of Mr. Pitt combined to show him another token of their affectionate respect. They had a great dinner on the 28th, in celebration of his birth-day. Mr. Wilberforce appears to have been prevented by indisposition from remaining all through. But he went to see the preparations, and he has described the scene as follows in his journal: "May 28. At Merchant Taylors' Hall—grand celebration of Pitt's birth-day—Lord Spencer chairman —823 tickets and people—near 200 more asked for. I withdrew, after walking about for an hour and seeing everybody, just as dinner going on table. All went off well. Pitt not there."

It was for this festival, and in relation to its object,

that a celebrated and beautiful song by Mr. Canning was composed. Several times already has it appeared in print, but no biography of Pitt could be, I think, deemed complete which did not contain it. Here then it is:—

The Pilot that weathered the Storm.

" If hushed the loud whirlwind that ruffled the deep,
The sky if no longer dark tempests deform,
When our perils are past, shall our gratitude sleep?
No—here's to the pilot that weathered the storm!

At the footstool of Power let Flattery fawn;
Let Faction her idol extend to the skies;
To Virtue in humble retirement withdrawn,
Unblamed may the accents of gratitude rise!

And shall not *his* memory to Britain be dear,
Whose example with envy all nations behold?
A statesman unbiassed by int'rest or fear,
By power uncorrupted, untainted by gold!

Who, when terror and doubt through the universe reigned,
While rapine and treason their standards unfurled,
The hearts and the hopes of his country maintained,
And our kingdom preserved 'midst the wreck of the world!

Unheeding, unthankful, we bask in the blaze
While the beams of the sun in full majesty shine;
When he sinks into twilight with fondness we gaze,
And mark the mild lustre that gilds his decline.

So, Pitt, when the course of thy greatness is o'er,
Thy talents, thy virtues, we fondly recall;
Now justly we prize thee, when lost we deplore;
Admired in thy zenith, but loved in thy fall.

O! take then—for dangers by wisdom repelled,
For evils by courage and constancy braved—
O! take, for a throne by thy counsels upheld,
The thanks of a people thy firmness has saved!

And O! if again the rude whirlwind should rise,
The dawning of peace should fresh darkness deform,
The regrets of the good and the fears of the wise
Shall turn to the pilot that weathered the storm."

The Session was closed by a Speech from the King on the 28th of June, and next day the Parliament, which had now approached its Septennial period, was dissolved. Pitt had intended to come up from Walmer several days before. He writes to Addington on the 24th, "I shall be in town by five at latest on Sunday, and, if it continues convenient to you that our engagement should hold, I shall be very glad to take a quiet dinner with you at six. Perhaps, if you should have no particular use for your carriage and horses, you would let it be in Park Place a quarter before six to convey me."

Six, I may observe in passing, appears, from other correspondence also, to have been at that time among the higher classes the usual, nay, the universal dinner-hour.

Pitt, however, was induced to prolong for two or three days his stay upon the coast, and he was then consulted by letter upon the terms of the Royal Speech. This is shown by his reply to Addington, which Dean Pellew also produces.

"Walmer Castle, June 26, 1802.

. . . . . .

"I lose no time in returning the draft of the Speech, which appears to me to be excellent, and to bear no marks either of the lamp or the night-cap. I have ventured, however, to attempt to heighten a little the principal tirade by a few verbal alterations, but chiefly by inserting, as shortly as possible, two or three leading topics, which seem material enough to deserve particular notice."

In the General Election which now ensued Pitt had at least one seat at his disposal, as the following letter will evince.

Mr. Pitt to Mr. Robert Ward.

"SIR, "Park Place, June 28, 1802.

"I wrote to Lord Mulgrave on Friday, from Walmer Castle, to mention to him that Lord Lowther had had the goodness to offer to name a Member at my recommendation for the borough of Cockermouth for the first three years of the Parliament; after which he wishes to reserve it for his nephew, Lord Burghersh. I also stated to him that I hoped to be released from the only claim which could prevent my having the satisfaction of proposing you to him as a candidate, if it should be agreeable to you. The election will, I understand, be free from trouble, and from any but a very trifling expense; and, though less satisfactory than one for the whole Parliament, I am in hopes it will appear to you too eligible to decline. I have therefore thought it best, as Lord Mulgrave is out of town and as the time presses, to state these particulars to yourself. I am just setting out to Short Grove, in my way to Cambridge; and if you could possibly let me hear from you on the

subject by to-day's post, I shall be much obliged to you, as Lord Lowther is waiting my answer.

"I am, Sir,

"Your faithful and obedient servant,

"W. PITT.

"My direction for to-day's post is, Joseph Smith's, Esq., Short Grove, Saffron Walden; and afterwards, Pembroke Hall, Cambridge."

To explain the mention of Lord Mulgrave in the first line of this letter, it should be stated that Mr. Ward was his brother-in-law.

The offer so kindly made was thankfully accepted, and in the new Parliament Mr. Ward became one of the Members for Cockermouth. He was a man of some note in politics, but much more in literature, and will chiefly be remembered by posterity as the author of *Tremaine.*

The great popularity of the peace throughout the country was manifest in the elections which ensued. Neither the brilliant ability nor yet the local influence of Mr. Windham could save him from defeat at Norwich. He was compelled to take refuge at St. Mawes, a small borough under the nomination of Lord Buckingham.

A letter of Mr. Pitt, from Bromley Hill, the house of his friend Mr. Long, gives his view of the general result of these elections.

Mr. Pitt to Mr. Rose.

"DEAR ROSE, "Bromley Hill, July 10, 1802.

"I was sincerely glad to find that the election at Southampton passed in a manner which must have

been so satisfactory to yourself and your son. You will have seen that ours at Cambridge was perfectly quiet; and it was not only quiet, but attended with every mark of zeal and cordiality. I wish we had as good accounts of three or four other places where (as it has turned out) the Jacobins have triumphed, and in some instances unaccountably; but upon the whole, I do not see anything likely materially to change the relative strength of parties, or the general complexion of the House.

"I am likely to be detained by different engagements near town for a week or ten days, and shall then return to Walmer Castle, where I shall be most delighted to see you whenever you find it most convenient, and have a fair wind. I shall probably not go to Somersetshire till late in the autumn; but I hope to find an opportunity of making a coasting voyage, and returning your visit in the course of the summer. If your sons are with you when you embark, I shall be very glad, if it suits them, to be of your party. I am going on extremely well, and expect to pass muster as a stout and able-bodied seaman by the time I see you.

"Ever yours,

"W. PITT."

Before his return to Walmer, Pitt appears also to have visited the Prime Minister at the Lodge of Richmond Park. A cordial confidence still, as we have seen, prevailed between them. The Presidency of the Board of Control becoming vacant at this period, and the post being offered to Lord Castlereagh, Pitt most warmly pressed its acceptance on his Noble Friend. Lord Castlereagh consented, and thus did the former Secretary for Ireland, in the brunt of all the Catholic claims,

become, with the entire approval of Pitt, the Cabinet colleague of Addington.

On the 2nd of July had died the veteran Colonel Barré, on whom, as will be recollected, Mr. Pitt had in 1784 conferred the Clerkship of the Pells in exchange for a previous pension. The Pells were now, therefore, at Mr. Addington's disposal. He offered this rich sinecure in the first place to Pitt's friend, Mr. Steele, who declined it. Next he said to the retired Minister himself that he (Mr. Pitt) would "much gratify the feelings of the public if he would consent to take the office." Pitt at once, in a most becoming spirit, gave an answer in the negative. That decision, we may observe, was not perhaps in complete accordance with the opinion of all his friends. In view of his much embarrassed affairs we find that Bishop Tomline wrote as follows a year before:—"I own I do not see any great objection to Mr. Pitt having a second sinecure place, provided it comes directly from the King." [9]

The office thus declined by Pitt was then conferred by Addington on his own son Henry, a boy of sixteen. Dean Pellew gives an extract to show that Pitt entirely approved of this appointment. For Pitt writes to Addington on the 29th of July:—"I rejoice most sincerely that you have found it practicable to dispose of the Pells as you have done. Under all the circumstances it is infinitely preferable to any other use you could make of it." [1] There are some persons, however, who

[9] The Bishop of Lincoln to Mr. Rose, July 24, 1801.

[1] Life of Lord Sidmouth, note at vol. i. p. 499.

may still be inclined to prefer the example of Mr. Pitt in 1784 to his precept in 1802.

Paris was at that time thronged with English visitors. At the conclusion of the Peace Lord Whitworth had been sent over as the representative of England. Ever since, and especially at the close of the General Election, both the ambassador and his consort, the Duchess Dowager of Dorset, were busily employed in presentations. Party after party of their travelling countrymen desired, with natural curiosity, to see the Consular Court. Among all these the foremost was Mr. Fox. He had gone to Paris accompanied by his former mistress, Mrs. Armistead, whom now, for the first time, he publicly owned for his wife, a secret marriage between them having been contracted seven years before.[2] None of the many thronging visitors appear to have viewed France with such unqualified approval. Here is one of Mr. Rogers's notes:—"I said in one respect the French had the advantage of us. He (Mr. Fox) said, indeed in almost every respect."[3]

In this mood of mind it was natural that Fox should be closely drawn to the First Consul. With him he had several interviews, and was received with many tokens of honour and esteem.

Many years later Napoleon at St. Helena recalled these conversations with Fox, and expressed his high regard for him. "Whenever," said Napoleon, "I wished to stir him, I talked of the *Machine Infernale*, and I told him

[2] See his letter to Lord Lauderdale of July 28, 1802, the day before he commenced his journey.

[3] Rogers's Recollections, p. 24, the date of this conversation being Paris, Oct. 24, 1802.

that the Ministers of England had attempted my assassination. Here he used to contradict me warmly, and he always ended by saying, in his faulty French, *Premier Consul, ôtez vous donc cela de votre tête.*" [4]

The reception of Mr. Erskine, at least in the first instance, was not quite so satisfactory. He had gone to Paris no doubt in the full belief that all France was ringing with his high forensic fame; but when he was presented at the Tuileries, he was greeted by the First Consul with the "killing question" (as a gentleman present not unaptly terms it), *Etes vous légiste?* [5]

But while courtesies were passing between the First Consul and some of his visitors at Paris, clouds had already risen between him and the Ministers in England. His aggressive designs, more especially upon Piedmont and Switzerland, were scarcely any longer concealed. He had taken forcible possession of the island of Elba, and compelled the cession to France of Louisiana and the two Floridas. So early as the 8th of April, Mr. Pitt, happening to join Lord Malmesbury on horseback in Hyde Park, avowed his serious apprehensions. He had thought (he said) at the time of the Preliminaries that Bonaparte would rest satisfied with the power and reputation which he had acquired. Now, however, he was giving fresh proofs of his insatiable ambition. "Still," said Mr. Pitt, "I do not regret having spoken in favour of the Peace. It had become a necessary measure; and rest for England, however

[4] Journal de l'Empereur Napoléon à St. Hélène, par Las Cases, vol. iv. p. 171, ed. 1823.

[5] Trotter's Memoirs of Fox, p. 268, ed. 1811. Mr. Trotter was himself present.

short, is desirable. . . . . But we should take care to make Bonaparte see we are prepared. . . . . It should be made evident to him that England will submit to no insult, nor suffer any injury." [6]

On the other hand General Bonaparte had, as he conceived, several strong grounds of complaint against the English Government. We still kept possession of Malta, the conditions on the other side not having been fulfilled. We did not expel the emigrants from Jersey, as the First Consul required us to do. We did not, as he also wished, ask the Princes of the House of Bourbon to leave England. We did not arrest the freedom of the English press even when it sent forth, as was too frequently the case, offensive and personal attacks on General Bonaparte himself. The First Consul was stirred above all by the writings of Jean Peltier. This was a French gentleman of Royalist opinions, who had resided several years in London, and who had begun to publish since the Peace a new French paper, called *l'Ambigu*. Some of his articles were not only extreme, but even, it may be said, flagitious. Thus, in one place he draws a parallel between Bonaparte and Cæsar, and refers in approving terms to "the poniard in the hands of the last Romans!" In another place, still pursuing his classical allusions, he predicts that Bonaparte will one day be elected Emperor, and wishes that he may find on the morrow "the apotheosis of Romulus!" Such passages might be fairly construed as a direct encouragement to his assassination.

[6] Diaries of Lord Malmesbury, vol. iv. p. 64.

But independently of such shameful articles—independently even of Jean Peltier himself, and of other French writers in London—the general licence of the English press in its comments on the Consular Government became the subject of repeated diplomatic representations. In vain did the English Ministers declare that they had read the publications of Peltier with the utmost displeasure. In vain did they promise that legal proceedings against him should be taken by the Attorney-General. In vain did they explain that the law of England only gave authority to punish, and not at all to prevent or anticipate a libel. The French Government continued to insist that England was bound, whatever might be her particular law and constitution, and even at the risk of having to re-model them, to put an end to a deep and continued system of defamation carried on in her capital, and directed against the chief of the neighbouring Republic.

It must be owned, I think, that if on this subject of defamation Lord Hawkesbury had desired to make a counter-charge, the materials for it were by no means wanting. To counterbalance the *Ambigu* in London, there had been set on foot the *Argus* at Paris. As the former was in French and conducted by the emigrant Royalists, so was the latter in English and conducted by the fugitives of Republican principles from England and Ireland. It may well be conceived that these two papers, unlike in all besides, vied with each other in the most rancorous vituperation.

"*Arcades ambo*—id est, Blackguards both!"

But further still, and at this very time, the *Moniteur*

—a paper not, like Peltier's, quite unauthorized, but on the contrary, under direct Government control—charged the Ministers of England with inviting and honouring assassination. They had been parties, it seems, to the plot against the life of the First Consul. "Georges"—so said the *Moniteur*—"wears openly in London his red riband as a reward for the *Machine Infernale*, which destroyed part of Paris and put to death thirty women, children, and peaceful citizens. Does not this special protection authorize us in believing that if he had succeeded he would have received the Order of the Garter?"[7]

On the whole, then, towards the close of July M. Otto sent in a note to Lord Hawkesbury, stating again and at length his grounds of complaint on the subject of the Jersey emigrants, of the Bourbon Princes, and of the licentious press, and on these and similar cases founding six distinct demands. The reply of Lord Hawkesbury was firm in its substance, although forbearing in its tone. He explained and vindicated the liberty of the press as it existed in England, and added that we could not consent to change our law and constitution to gratify the wishes of any foreign Power. And as to the proposed expulsion of the emigrants, his language was not less decided. The French Government (he said) must have formed a most erroneous judgment of the temper of the British nation, if they imagined that we would ever consent to violate those rights on which our liberties are founded.

[7] The whole passage is translated and inserted in Mr. Adolphus's History, vol. vii. p. 646.

I shall have occasion only too soon to trace the further progress of these lamentable jealousies and differences, which contained within them the seeds of coming war. At present I desire only to record their origin and outset.

During the rest of the summer and autumn Mr. Pitt continued to reside at Walmer Castle. His familiar letters show the great pleasure that he took in his quiet country life. Thus he writes to Dundas on the 5th of September :—

"I have been gaining a great deal of health and strength by riding and sailing; and am delighted more than ever with my residence here. I am just now in the midst of partridge-shooting; and am preparing to enter on a beautiful farm, which I have taken in the neighbourhood, and which will furnish me with constant occupation till Parliament meets."

And thus on the same day to Addington :—

"I should be very glad to show you all the improvements of this place, both in beauty and comfort. . . . . My new farm (if Parliament fortunately can be deferred till after Christmas) will keep me constantly employed for the remainder of the year, or till *the pacificator of Europe* takes it into his head to send an army from the opposite coast to revenge himself for some newspaper paragraph."

There is no reason at all to doubt that Mr. Pitt at Walmer Castle really felt the cheerfulness and content which his letters express. It would not be inconsistent with that general frame of mind if now and then there did come over him some little feeling of languor in his

calm retreat, or some short aspiration after the more active scenes which he had left behind. The experience of history proves that thoughts like these will sometimes, though almost it may be said unconsciously, arise. They will pass, like summer clouds, over the retired years, at least in early manhood, of men who have played an important part in the world's affairs. They will have that effect which one of them, though of far inferior note, John Wilkes, in one of his letters hitherto unpublished, has happily described: "I remember Diderot wrote to me two years ago: *Ami Wilkes, que faites vous? Si vous vous reposez, vous êtes bien à plaindre.* I do not sleep—shall I say?—on my laurels."[8]

Later in the same month, however, Mr. Pitt had a severe attack of illness. It is mentioned as follows in a letter from his friend and physician, Sir Walter Farquhar. I derive it from a copy which I found among the Pitt Papers, but I cannot tell how it came there, nor does it appear to whom it was addressed.

"MY DEAR SIR, "Ramsgate, Sept. 24, 1802.

"Upon my return home last night I found your letter. I don't wonder at your anxiety, but I am happy that I had the power of relieving you.

"The alarming symptoms, it is true, did not last very long, but months in such a situation I found long hours. The day is our own now, and the last battle proves that

[8] This MS. letter is dated Aug. 20, 1778. It will be found in one of the last places where a reader might have looked for it—pasted in the seventeenth volume of an illustrated copy of Byron which extends to forty-four volumes, and which was purchased for the British Museum in 1860.

the mainsprings are good. I become more and more interested about the first of human beings, and at last I have carried the point I have so long wished to accomplish—I mean the Bath Waters. Mr. Pitt is to go there about the month of November.

"Believe me, &c.,

"WALTER FARQUHAR."

Pitt, however, makes very light of his own illness in a letter designed to meet his mother's eye.

Mr. Pitt to Mrs. Stapleton.

"Walmer Castle, Sept. 17, 1802.

"DEAR MRS. STAPLETON,

"As report might possibly carry to Burton an exaggerated account of my having been unwell, I know it will be a satisfaction to yourself, as well as to my mother, to know the truth from myself. I have, in fact, been plagued a good deal for a few days from a bilious attack, which, I believe, was brought on partly by a sudden change of weather, and partly by a little over-exercise in shooting. By the aid, however, of my friend Sir Walter, who happens to be at present taking some holidays at Ramsgate, the complaint is taking its leave, and I have no doubt of being in a day or two as well and as strong as I have happily found myself (with this slight exception) ever since I came here in the beginning of the summer. Sir Walter tells me he has received late accounts from Burton, which are tolerably good. I heartily hope you will be enabled to confirm them. Hester arrived here yesterday in her way to join her travelling friends at Dover. I hope to enjoy the pleasure of her society, at all events, till

Monday; and, perhaps, if the winds are contrary, some days longer. Pray give my duty and love to my mother, and remember me affectionately to Harriet.

"Ever, dear Mrs. Stapleton,

"affectionately yours,

"W. PITT."

The "Hester" to whom Pitt here refers was his eldest niece. And this brings me to some scenes of personal dissension on which—as painful to myself, and as uninteresting to the public—I desire to touch as lightly as I can. The great unkindness of Lord Stanhope had by degrees estranged from him all the members of his family. His unmarried daughter, and subsequently also his three sons by his second marriage, left his house.

Lady Hester Stanhope took her departure from Chevening early in the year 1800, and went to reside with her grandmother at Burton Pynsent. In the autumn of 1802 she joined her friends Mr. and Mrs. Egerton, of Cheshire, in a journey to the Continent, and she continued abroad with them until their return in the summer of next year.

In the course of the next month Pitt received several other visits at Walmer Castle. First came Mr. Canning, and after he had gone Lord Grenville; and probably there were others also.

Mr. Canning subsequently repeated to Lord Malmesbury the conversations which had passed. But I think it perfectly plain that in this hearsay account as put down by Lord Malmesbury some errors have crept in. Mr. Pitt is represented as saying that "he had pledged

himself, but himself singly, to advise and support the present Ministry. This pledge he considered as solemnly binding, not redeemable by any lapse of time, nor ever to be cancelled without the express consent of Mr. Addington." [9] Now, in the first place, it is utterly inconceivable that any Parliamentary statesman could pledge himself in this absolute manner to any other statesman irrespective of the measures which that other statesman might pursue. Secondly, it is to be noted that Mr. Pitt, whose personal honour is not impeached, acted before the close of this very year in direct contravention of this imaginary pledge. Thirdly, we must observe that even when most assailed, Mr. Addington neither in public nor in private alleged any such compact, as he certainly would have done had any such compact in truth existed.

I hold it, therefore, as beyond dispute, that Mr. Pitt's promise of support to Addington on taking office was regarded on both sides as promises in such a case have ever been—conditional and dependent on the future course of Ministerial policy.

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[9] Diaries of Lord Malmesbury, vol. iv. p. 75.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

1802 — 1803.

French annexations — Want of confidence in Addington's administration — Conspiracy of Colonel Despard — Letter from the Duke of Orleans — Pitt's residence at Bath — His political visitors — Pitt advises naval and military preparations — Scheme for reinstating him in office — Discountenanced by him — He declines to give further advice to Ministers — Opening of the new Parliament — Great speeches of Sheridan and Canning — Pitt on the state of the country — Pitt assailed in the *Times* — The Budget — Elevation of Dundas to the Peerage — Lord Castlereagh at Bath — Pitt returns to London — His interview with Addington.

DURING the summer and autumn of 1802 the English people continued to enjoy and to exult in the blessings of peace. The arrival of General Andréossy as ambassador was hailed as a new pledge of re-established amity. But it was not long ere sinister rumours again arose. It was known how hostile to England was still the tone of many men of influence at Paris. It was known how the great Consul chafed at the intrigues of the French emigrants and the personalities of the English press. It was known that, though his complaints had been answered, his dissatisfaction was not removed.

Nor, on the other hand, could the English public view without growing apprehensions the continued

system of territorial aggrandisement which the French Government pursued. In August there went forth a Decree or *Consulte* of the Senate annexing to France the isle of Elba. In September there was another *Senatus-Consulte* annexing the entire of Piedmont, and leaving to the King of Sardinia only the island of that name. In October there came the occupation of the Duchies of Parma and Placentia upon the death of the last Grand Duke. At nearly the same time, moreover, Switzerland being distracted by a civil conflict, a French army of forty thousand men, commanded by General Ney, was marched into that country. General Bonaparte, who in France had recently by a vote of the people been named Consul for life, with an extension of his already vast authority, was in due course proclaimed also "Mediator of the Swiss Republic," and exerted a decisive influence on its affairs.

The concentration of so much power in the single hands of General Bonaparte might no doubt in the eyes of the French people be excused by his wonderful genius and energy, which no man denied; but other nations are not to be blamed if they saw in these only an aggravation of the danger.

Under such circumstances the more reflecting and far-sighted among English politicians began seriously to doubt whether another appeal to arms could be long averted. They regretted not to hear of any adequate measures for precaution and defence. They asked themselves whether Addington was really the right man to steer the vessel of the state if a tempest should arise. Lord Malmesbury, who from May to October had tra-

velled in divers parts of England and conversed with many persons, has recorded in his journal the anxious feelings that he heard expressed. Two men in high office, the Duke of Portland and Lord Glenbervie, held language to him that went to reprobate rather than defend the conduct of the administration to which they belonged. "And," adds Lord Malmesbury, "strong symptoms of its weakness and of the want of confidence of the country began to show themselves."[1]

Meanwhile, however, the tranquillity of England in its home affairs was only ruffled by a strange conspiracy of Colonel Edward Marcus Despard. This officer, an Irishman by birth, had served his King with fidelity and honour for thirty years. At the time of the Nootka Sound affair he had held a command in Honduras; but some part of his conduct being open to reprehension, he was suspended and sent home. There, a disappointed and a soured man, he renounced his allegiance, and engaged in traitorous projects against the State.

These projects were soon, at least in some part, revealed. Colonel Despard, being arrested on suspicion, was immured for three years in the prison of Cold Bath Fields. His treatment during his captivity was on several occasions complained of and discussed in the House of Commons. On his release it appeared that his temper was inflamed by a sense of his pretended wrongs. It is probable that his intellect also was in some degree disordered. He began to frequent low ale-houses in London, and to league himself with some

[1] Diaries, &c., vol. iv. p. 74.

of the vilest of mankind. In conjunction with these he formed a plot, cemented by an oath of secrecy, for murdering the King and Royal Family, and seizing the Tower, the Bank, and other public offices.

The idea of Colonel Despard was secretly to load with ball the great gun in St. James's Park—to surround it by a band of the conspirators when the King should go to open Parliament in November—and to discharge the deadly missiles at the Royal carriage as it passed. One conspirator, more humane than his fellows, observed that the lives of many other persons wholly innocent would be thereby destroyed, but the Colonel answered coolly, "Let them keep out of the way!"

But others of the gang betrayed him. The Ministers received timely notice of his whole design, and took their measures accordingly. On the 20th of November, three days before the King was to go down and open Parliament, a strong party of the London, Surrey, and Kent patrols surrounded the Oakley Arms, a small public-house in Lambeth. There they seized the Colonel with thirty-two of his confederates—all men of the lowest class. In the February following Despard was brought to trial. He was ably defended by Mr. Best, afterwards Chief Justice and Lord Wynford. Some witnesses of the first rank—among others, Sir Alured Clarke and Lord Nelson—deposed to his former high character and honourable services. But the evidence of his plot was clear and positive, and he was found Guilty. Finally, Colonel Despard was hanged, in company with six others left for execution as the worst of his wretched gang.

In the latter part of October Mr. Pitt fulfilled his promise to Sir Walter Farquhar, and set out for Bath. Just then he had acquired a new residence in London. His term of the house in Park Place having ended, he had taken another as small, No. 14, York Place, Portman Square. York Place, though it bears that name, is in fact only a continuation of Baker Street. Accustomed as Pitt was to Downing Street and Whitehall, he must have felt some economy indeed, but considerable inconvenience, in a situation so far removed from the House of Commons.

On his way from London to Bath Mr. Pitt paid a passing visit at Richmond to Mr. Addington, who has described it as follows in a letter to his brother Hiley:—"Pitt dined and slept here on Sunday (the 24th) on his way to Bath. He has no symptoms of illness; very slight traces of it in his looks, and none whatever in his appetite and spirits."

So great was the space which Mr. Pitt continued at this period to fill in the public eye, that even while out of office he received such communications as might have been, we should imagine, more naturally addressed to his successor. Thus during this very journey from Walmer, the Duke of Orleans, at a later period King Louis Philippe, made an attempt to see him in York Place; but having mistaken the day, and thereby missed the interview which he desired, the Duke wrote to Mr. Pitt a remarkable letter. Here follow its principal passages in their original English, showing how great a proficiency in our language His Most Serene Highness had attained.

The Duke of Orleans to Mr. Pitt.

"SIR, "Twickenham, Oct. 18, 1802.

"Upon a false report that you was in town, I called this morning at your house in York Place to request an interview with you. My object was to disclose some ideas suggested by the present state of Europe, and particularly by that of Switzerland. . . . . Its importance as a military post is generally felt at present. Indeed, it commands the military operations in Germany, France, and Italy; and in my opinion the possession of it by the French has been one of the principal causes which brought about the battle of Marengo, and all the following disasters. If you think it worth your while afterwards, I will very willingly explain, as I conceive it, what advantages might result from the possession of it by the Allies to carry on the war wherever they choose, and especially *in France*, which lies open on that side, because neither Louis the Fourteenth nor Vauban ever thought of defending that part of the frontier, never thinking the neutrality of Switzerland could be disregarded and infringed. My object at present is only to point out to your sagacity some means of protecting Switzerland efficaciously, and to offer my services for that purpose.

"The Swiss are in want of money, arms, and ammunition, &c. But, above all, they are in want of a *pledge* that their country will not fall a prey to those who will assist them against the French; and they want *some sort of tie* to keep their councils together, and maintain the vigour of their resistance by the preservation of unanimity. I am afraid proclamations would be unequal to persuade them that Austria will not possess itself of their country. A good and independent Swiss army, led by a man in the interest of England and

Austria, and not obnoxious to themselves, seems to me to be *the best pledge* and *the best tie*, and at the same time the most powerful assistance against France, that can be obtained from Switzerland. It appears difficult that its leader could be a Swiss. They have amongst themselves neither Princes nor men of high rank to assume that superiority over his countrymen which is necessary to keep them united against the common enemy, to smother discord at home, and create respect abroad. In former times the Dutch were defended by Prince Maurice of Nassau against their lawful Sovereign and the Duke of Alva, his representative, and had it not been for him, it is probable they had been overpowered. This, Sir, is the part I should be ambitious to act for Switzerland against its tyrants, and for Europe against its oppressors. I offer myself with confidence to you, because I believe my situation and relations are *uniques* for this noble object. The honour I have of being descended from those Kings who have been the protectors of the Swiss, and whom the Swiss have so long and so faithfully guarded, would make me popular amongst them. I can speak their language, and I have lived two years among them, part of which I was wandering in their mountains without any fixed abode; so that I am not quite a stranger to their country and manners.

"With respect to my family, I find myself in that particular situation which I need not describe to you, Sir, but which must render me faithful to the interests of Europe, because it must make me anxious of opening for myself some career elsewhere than in France, where I see too many shoals to steer a proper course, and to keep on that line of honour and of integrity from which I hope never to depart.

"I am neither English nor Austrian. I am a natural

enemy to Bonaparte, and to all similar Governments, with whom I never can be reconciliated: therefore I cannot be obnoxious to the Swiss, and must be above suspicion. Still, by my extraordinary situation, England and Austria can find in me all the advantages of my being a French Prince, without the inconveniences arising from that quality. . . . . Dispose of me, Sir, and show me the way; I will follow it.

"I have the honour to be, Sir,
"With the highest consideration,
"Your most affectionate
"L. P. D'ORLÉANS."

I know not what answer may have been returned to this overture, nor whether any step of any kind was taken in consequence of it; but I find that three years afterwards the Duke made to the British Government another tender of his "military services," which the Government respectfully declined as inconsistent with "the established rules of the British service."[2]

Meanwhile Mr. Pitt had continued his journey to Bath. On reaching his destination he took a house in Pulteney Street, and began to drink those waters to which his father had so often resorted, but which until then he had never tried. He was cheered by the presence at Bath of his friends Lord Camden and Lord Carrington; and ere long there came also Lord Malmesbury and Lord Mulgrave.

Other politicians sometimes went to Bath for a day or two, on purpose to confer with him. Such was the

[2] See Lord Castlereagh's answer, dated Oct. 5, 1805, in his published Correspondence, vol. viii. p. 9, ed. 1851.

case, for example, with Hiley Addington, who arrived on the 6th of November, and at his brother's request. Pitt explained to him at length his views of foreign politics, which, indeed, he was always revolving in his mind; and on the 11th he wrote himself to the Prime Minister with his matured and final counsel: "On the general state of things I can form very little judgment. But I rather fear, from the accounts from the Continent, that there is very little prospect of your meeting with any effectual support from thence at present either in an attempt to save Switzerland or for any other useful purpose. If this should be the case, I own that on reflection I doubt very much the prudence, though not at all the justice, of risking at all hazards the determination of withholding such of the restitutions as have not yet taken place. And having conceived this doubt, I feel anxious just to state it to you, because I certainly was very strongly inclined to the contrary opinion, both when I conversed with you and as late as when I saw your brother on his way to town." Mr. Pitt then goes on to advise that we should rather—and he underlines the words—"content ourselves with a state of *very increased and constant preparation*, both naval and military."

It is worthy of note that the advice of Mr. Pitt in this communication was implicitly and promptly adopted by the Government. On the 7th of October Lord Hobart had written instructions for the retention of the Cape of Good Hope. On the 16th of November, only five days after Pitt's letter from Bath, an order for its restitution was sent out.

Mr. Pitt to Mr. Rose.

"DEAR ROSE, "Bath, Nov. 7, 1802.

. . . .

"I had been meaning to write to you to tell you what I know you will be glad to hear, that I am much the better for my visit hither . . . , and you would make me very happy if you can let me have the satisfaction of seeing you while I am here. There are many points too long for a letter which I shall be very glad if we meet to talk over with you. I mean to go on Thursday to my mother's, but shall return here in time for my afternoon's draught of the waters on Saturday, and from thence shall continue here till the business of the Session calls me to town. . . . . Perhaps even the circumstances may be such as to make me doubt about going at all before Christmas. . . .

"Ever sincerely yours,

"W. PITT."

On the 13th Mr. Rose did accordingly arrive at Bath, and had some political conversation that same evening when quite alone with Mr. Pitt. He stated some strong arguments against the course respecting Switzerland which the Ministers had begun to pursue. Mr. Rose clearly saw, however, that if his chief did go up to town for the King's Speech on the 23rd, as Mr. Pitt then designed, he would—partly on a point of honour as having been consulted—express his full approbation of the foreign policy of Addington. That he should so far and so prematurely commit himself, seemed to Mr. Rose most strongly to be deprecated. Therefore, as he says, "I used all the means in my

power to dissuade him from attending the House of Commons on the day of the opening of the Session. He discussed the matter with me temperately, but came to no determination. He told me Lord Bathurst, who was here a few days ago, had expressed the same wish without saying why, or entering into any reasons for it."[3]

Exactly similar were the entreaties which the retired Minister at the same time received from Bishop Tomline. "I wish to apprise you," so writes the Bishop to Rose, "that I wrote a very strong letter to Mr. Pitt last Monday. . . . I begged that he would stay at Bath, for which his health afforded a sufficient reason, and wait to see what turn things will take. I told him also, which I am sure is true, that by giving his unqualified support to the present Ministry, he would lose the confidence of the country."[4]

On the 14th, and again on the 15th, Rose renewed in earnest terms his discussion with Pitt. "It ended," he tells us, "in a positive assurance from Mr. Pitt that he would not go to London, and in my promising to remain here with him, with which he declared himself to be perfectly satisfied. Mr. Pitt, however, said he could not avoid going to London for the Votes for the Army and Navy, if there should be the least difficulty about a large peace establishment."

There were some other friends of Mr. Pitt less tranquil than these at Bath. There were some who were chafing

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[3] Diaries, &c., of Mr. Rose, vol. i. p. 487.

[4] Bishop of Lincoln to Mr. Rose, Buckden, Nov. 11, 1802.

at his continued exclusion from office, and who panted for prompt measures to restore him. Mr. Canning, above all, formed at this time a scheme which, prepossessed though I am in favour of its object, I think not defensible in all its circumstances, and only to be in part excused by youth and ardour of mind.

The plan of Mr. Canning was to send an Address, as he had already prepared it, to Mr. Addington, and a copy of it at the same time to Mr. Pitt. It was to be signed, if possible, by several persons of great political weight. It was to represent to Mr. Addington the increasing dangers of the country, and urge upon him, though in most friendly terms, that "the administration of the Government be replaced in the hands of Mr. Pitt."

Combined with Mr. Canning in this project were three friends of his own age and standing in politics, Lord Granville Leveson, Lord Morpeth, and Mr. Sturges Bourne. But it was countenanced and aided by a man of much more years and influence, Lord Malmesbury. Early in November, and at the request of Canning, Lord Malmesbury waited upon the Duke of York at the Horse Guards, and told him what was going on. The remarks of the Duke were very frank and sensible. He said among other things: "Mr. Pitt must come in; it is impossible he should not; the public call for him; they will force Mr. Addington to give way. . . . But as to this address of yours, I doubt if it will do. I fear Mr. Addington is too vain to appreciate justly either the limits of his own abilities or the extent of the danger. Some of his friends, however, are more awake to both. I have reason to believe that

Lord Auckland and Lord Hobart are prepared to withdraw from him. If Addington sees this, he will perhaps be frightened into resignation."

In the further progress of Mr. Canning's scheme there was considerable difficulty. The signatures of *Pittites* only—of known and personal friends of Mr. Pitt—would be of no avail. Other persons of rank and influence were not found very ready to sign, or at least to take the lead in signing. Under these circumstances there occurred to Mr. Canning a new and strange device. He proposed that the paper should be sent unsigned, and with a Preface or Præscript as follows:—"It is thought to be most respectful to Mr. Addington and Mr. Pitt that the enclosed paper should be transmitted to them without the signatures, which are ready to be affixed to it." [5]

This expedient, however, was by no means satisfactory to the other persons engaged in the project. It was accordingly laid aside, and the canvass, as it may be called, for signatures was resumed.

It had been designed that the project until its execution should be kept a profound secret from Mr. Pitt. But it was found no easy matter to leave in utter ignorance the principal person concerned. Canning himself went down to Bath for one night on the 17th. He desired to confer with his chief on other points of politics. To his own scheme he alluded only in the most general and guarded terms. At his departure he left Lord Malmesbury at liberty to tell or not to tell the whole, as he might be questioned, or as in his dis-

[5] Diaries, &c. of Lord Malmesbury, vol. iv. p. 103.

cretion he might deem best. Meanwhile, however, Lord Mulgrave arriving at Bath for a longer stay made known the entire project to Pitt.

Thus fully apprised, Pitt at once interfered and put down the scheme. He called on Lord Malmesbury at half-past eight one Sunday morning—it was the 21st of November—and entered immediately upon the subject. "I know," he began, "you are one in a plot not quite so desperate as Colonel Despard's;" and then he went on to state his grounds of objection to it. "It proceeds," he said, "from persons all in the same predicament—all considered as too much attached to me, and too inimical to Mr. Addington. A measure originating with and arranged by persons of this description, and these so few, would look like a plot or cabal. Whether I really did or did not know of it, there would most certainly be the suspicion that I had at least connived; and such a suspicion, independent of my feelings, would defeat the end of my coming into office, even supposing any good could result from it. It is therefore my wish—one which I expressed to Canning before he left Bath, and in which on reflection I have been confirmed more and more—that no further canvass should be made for names, supporters, or signatures to promote or compel Mr. Addington's resignation. If my coming into office is as generally desired as you suppose it, it is much better for me and for the thing itself to leave that opinion to work out its own way: and this must happen if the opinion is a prevailing one in the public mind; and if it is not, my coming into office at all is useless and improper."

In reply Lord Malmesbury argued the question a little further, but at last acquiesced. Letters from him and also from Mr. Pitt himself went to Mr. Canning; and in compliance with Pitt's positive injunction the entire project was dropped.

On another point at the same time Malmesbury and Canning found their chief more amenable. They earnestly pressed upon him the ill effect which had ensued in several cases from the reports of the advice which he had given to the Ministers. It is easy to perceive why this should be so, without imputing on that account the smallest blame to Addington, to Hawkesbury, or to any other person. When Pitt was consulted, only the most material papers were laid before him, and on these his opinion was formed. Then there might subsequently come to light other facts which had not at first sight seemed so important, and yet which might greatly modify his view. Then again his opinion might be sometimes alleged as in favour of a plan of policy, when in fact the plan which he approved had since on discussion in the Cabinet undergone some change in its details, and was no longer quite the same as had been laid before him.

On this point Pitt was convinced. "While I remain here at Bath," he said, "I shall decline to give any advice at all." That very day (the 17th) he had, as it chanced, received in the morning a letter from Lord Hawkesbury which enclosed despatches on the matters then depending with France, and which entreated his opinion on the whole subject. Mr. Pitt replied in conformity with his new determination. He wrote to his

Noble Friend that it was impossible for him to judge with safety or precision of such a weighty issue by any information that could be communicated at the distance they were from each other.[6]

It seems to me that on this point Mr. Pitt's determination was perfectly right and wise. I should say, from my observation of politics, that a statesman in office can never long continue to consult a statesman out of office with mutual satisfaction and to the public advantage, except in the single case when the statesman out of office has explicitly and finally renounced any idea of himself returning to power.

The new Parliament had met on the 16th, but the first days were consumed in electing Mr. Abbot Speaker, and in swearing in the new Members. On the 23rd the King went down and delivered the opening Speech. His Majesty expressed his joy at the late abundant harvest, and at the state, "flourishing beyond example," of the manufactures, commerce, and revenue. He exhorted the two Houses "to maintain the true principles of the Constitution in Church and State,"—an allusion, as some persons deemed it, to the Roman Catholic claims.[7] And on external affairs the King's words were as follows: "In my intercourse with Foreign Powers, I have been actuated by a sincere disposition

[6] On this Hawkesbury consultation compare the Diaries of Mr. Rose (vol. i. p. 489) and of Lord Malmesbury (vol. iv. p. 110).

[7] "They have put *Church and State* into the Speech; I think I guess why:" so wrote Mr. Canning from London. "It could only be to revive what led to Mr. Pitt going out of office:" so said Mr. Rose at Bath.

for the maintenance of peace. It is nevertheless impossible for me to lose sight of that established and wise system of policy by which the interests of other States are connected with our own; and I cannot, therefore, be indifferent to any material change in their relative condition and strength." And His Majesty went on to state his conviction that under these circumstances some "means of security" were "incumbent upon us."

Next day, at Bath, in reading over the King's Speech with Lord Malmesbury, Pitt remarked that it was very vague and loose, full of true statements that admitted any application. But still less was he pleased with a sentence which followed the one last cited. It referred to the necessity of providing for the various branches of the public service, "which," the King added, "it is a great satisfaction to me to think, may be fully accomplished without any considerable addition to the burdens of my people."—"That is false," said Pitt; "I know it to be impossible, unless it is intended to disarm the country entirely, and leave it in a defenceless state even for its home policy."

No amendment to the Address was moved in either House of Parliament. But Lord Grenville among the Peers, as Mr. Windham in the Commons, took occasion to renew their attacks upon the Ministry. Their grounds were much the same as in the preceding year. One new feature in their course could not, however, fail to strike. Lord Grenville, notwithstanding the great differences between himself and Pitt on the subject of the peace, now referred to him as to the only fit helmsman of the State. For thus did Grenville

conclude his eloquent harangue:—"You have no hope of salvation but by a strong system of defence. Europe is at this time sunk in distraction and despair, but the energy and spirit of Great Britain may arouse the States of the Continent to a glorious struggle for their liberty and independence. If, however, there be any hope, it is to be found in measures of decision and firmness—in a bold and animated tone held by a leader of courage and capacity—not by any of the men now in power, but by him to whom this country, to whom Europe looks up at this awful hour for the preservation of their dearest rights and liberties."[8]

Exactly similar was the tone of Grenville in his most familiar correspondence:—"To place the Government in Pitt's hands ought," he writes, "to be the wish of every man who thinks it at all material to himself whether Bonaparte shall or not treat us in twelve months precisely in the style he has now treated the Swiss."[9]

In the House of Commons (where next day the debate was renewed on the Report) the same strong wish was expressed by several Members. On the other hand, Mr. Fox in his second Speech argued in support of the administration mainly as shielding the country from the possible return of Mr. Pitt. To some degree he also pleaded the cause of the Government of France. It was noticed that his line in respect of commercial rivalry and commercial advantages was as nearly as possible opposite to his line in 1787. He was answered

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[8] Parl. Hist., vol. xxxvi. p. 945.
[9] Letter to Lord Buckingham, in the "Courts and Cabinets of George III.," vol. iii. p. 214.

by Mr. Canning with much ability, but with some lack of discretion, as committing more than he had any right to do the name of his chief at Bath.

Addington himself, who spoke on both nights, was observed to speak but poorly. "His own troops are heartily ashamed of him"—so says Canning of a later debate. In truth, however, his abilities were highly respectable. But used as he was to the gravity and authority of the Chair, he wanted altogether that power of quick replication which a leader in debate requires.

The report of Mr. Fox's speech in the House of Commons stirred Mr. Pitt at Bath, as a war-horse is stirred by the trumpet. Here, again, we have Lord Malmesbury's Journal:—"Saturday, May 27. The moment I came into the pump-room Pitt took me apart and began talking with much warmth on Fox's conduct and language in the House of Commons, and went on with such rapidity and eloquence that what he said to me was more like the *skeleton* of an answer to Fox than quiet conversation. He was eager to recur to what Fox had said on the Commercial Treaty in 1787, and we went to Bull's[1] to look back into the Debates. In short, he was so full of the subject as to raise apprehensions in my mind that he felt a strong hankering to go up and answer Fox."

Next day Mr. Pitt calling upon Lord Malmesbury renewed the conversation. He showed himself "sore at least, if not angry," at Canning's speech. "Our private regard gives him no right to assert opinions in my name; and I am the more averse to it, since it tends to

[1] The principal circulating Library at Bath.

do what of all things I most reprobate—to embroil me personally with Addington and Hawkesbury."

Pitt next reverted to Fox's speech, of which he again spoke with the same indignation and animation as the day before; and as Lord Malmesbury was about to reply, Pitt added: "I will anticipate what you, I know, have to say, by owning to you freely that it was my intention to have gone up when the Army or Navy Estimates came before the House, to stay only one day, and to speak only on one subject. But what you hinted to Rose set him, and he set me, a thinking; and on dispassionate reconsideration we agreed you were quite right. I am now decided to stay."

On the 2nd of December there ensued a debate in the House of Commons upon the Navy Estimates. The Ministers asked a vote for fifty thousand seamen,—nearly double the number that had been voted after the peace of 1783. So far then their proposal was agreeable to the friends at this time of warlike preparation, and it was passed without division, though not without remark. A great oration of Mr. Sheridan had been promised for this debate. Thus writes Canning to Lord Malmesbury three days before: "Sheridan is to come down with a speech for large establishments and against Bonaparte, but against Pitt and all of *us* also. . . . . He assures me that Fox will never be Minister, but he will do all that he can to keep Pitt out. This is confessedly his present game."

The great speech of Sheridan was, however, reserved till the 8th of December, when the Army Estimates came forward. They were moved by Mr. Charles Yorke as Secretary at War. "I was much surprised," said

Mr. Yorke, "when, on another evening, I heard an Hon. gentleman (Mr. Fox) maintain that there was no reason why a larger establishment than usual in former periods of peace should be maintained in Great Britain; and that there were reasons why even a smaller force would suffice everywhere but in the West Indies." It was no hard matter for Mr. Yorke to argue against this proposition, or to point out the dangers that impended from the Continent of Europe. He could reckon on the support of the House for the proposal which his speech contained—to provide for a regular force of nearly one hundred and thirty thousand men, counting officers, and including the regiments in India. This was an increase on the establishment voted on the first conclusion of the peace.

Then and after some other speeches Sheridan rose. He referred to Fox as to the man whom of all men upon earth he most loved and respected. But these sentiments did not withhold him from some keen animadversions, although in covert terms, upon the course which Fox had latterly been seeking to promote. He approved of the King's Speech. He approved of the large establishments. He approved of Addington as Minister. What (he asked) had other members really to allege against that Right Hon. gentleman? Theirs was a mere capricious dislike; for no better reason than is given in an epigram of Martial, or in an English parody upon that epigram:

> "I do not like thee, Dr. Fell,
> The reason why I cannot tell;
> But this I'm sure I know full well,
> I do not like thee, Dr. Fell."

Those who call to mind that Addington already bore the nick-name of "the Doctor," and who know the keen relish of the House of Commons for almost any jest, may easily imagine the roars of laughter with which Sheridan's allusion was received.

Sheridan proceeded in a strain of blended wit and argument. "What," he said, "did these gentlemen expect from the present Chancellor of the Exchequer? We treated him when in the Chair of this House with the respect he merited. . . . But did they expect that when he was Minister he was to stand up and call Europe to Order? Was he to send Mr. Colman, the Serjeant-at-Arms, to the Baltic and summon the Northern Powers to the Bar of this House? Was he to see the Powers of Germany scrambling like Members over the benches, and say—Gentlemen must take their places? Was he expected to cast his eye to the Tuscan gallery, and exclaim that strangers must withdraw? Was he to stand across the Rhine, and say—The Germans to the right, and the French to the left? If he could have done these things, I for one should always vote that the Speaker of the House should be appointed the Minister of the country. But the Right Hon. gentleman has done all that a reasonable man could expect him to do."

"Sir,"—so Sheridan continued—"I confess I wish to know what Mr. Pitt himself thinks. I should be glad to hear what his sentiments are of the call made for him, and loudly too, in another place by a vigorous statesman.[2] I well remember, Sir, and so do we all,

[2] Lord Grenville.

the character Mr. Pitt gave of the present administration. Does he mean to retract that character? I cannot suppose he does. . . . . Sir, when I see so many persons anxious about that gentleman, I am glad to hear that his health is re-established. But how, I would ask, can we with any consistency turn out the man who made the peace to bring in the man who avowed his approbation of it? . . . . . I suspect, therefore, that the political Philidor's game has been misunderstood; that his friends have displaced a knight and a castle when they should only have taken two pawns; that they have made an attempt to check-mate the King when they had no instructions for doing it. I cannot forget the period when the august Person of the Sovereign was held up as the only man who was against extending privileges to the Catholics in Ireland; and I cannot, therefore, brook the idea of calling that Right Hon. gentleman back to power, and forcing him upon the Crown. . . . . Mr. Pitt the only man to save the country! If a nation depends only upon one man, it cannot, and I will add, it does not deserve to be saved; it can be saved only by the Parliament and people."

Next after Sheridan rose Canning. In his great speech that evening he displayed not only a luminous eloquence, but the rarer gift (rarer, I mean, in him) of perfect discretion. He desired to express his sentiments, not of satisfaction merely, but of thankfulness, for the part which his Hon. Friend (Mr. Sheridan) had that day taken.

"It is by no means the first time," he said, "that my Hon. Friend, throwing aside all petty distinctions of party feeling, has come forward, often under circumstances of peculiar difficulty, often discouraged, always alone, as the champion of his country's rights and interests, and has rallied the hearts and spirits of the nation.[3] I trust we shall now hear no more of those miserable systems, the object of which is not to rouse us to ward off our ruin, but to reconcile us to submit to it. . . . 'We have nothing to dread from France but a rivalry in commerce,' says the Hon. gentleman opposite to me (Mr. Fox). Look round, Sir, on the state of the world, and can such an argument even from such a man need farther refutation?"

"And what, Sir"—so Canning went on in another passage—"what is the nature of the times in which we live? Look at France, and see what we have to cope with, and consider what has made her what she is? A man. You will tell me that she was great, and powerful, and formidable before the date of Bonaparte's Government; that he found in her great physical and moral resources; that he had but to turn them to account. True, and he did so. Compare the situation in which he found France with that to which he has raised her. I am no panegyrist of Bonaparte; but I cannot shut my eyes to the superiority of his talents, to the amazing ascendency of his genius. Tell me not

[3] Mr. Canning seems to allude especially to the course of Mr. Sheridan at the time of the Mutiny of the Nore. Look back in this volume to pp. 35 and 44.

of his measures and his policy—it is his genius, his character, that keeps the world in awe. Sir, to meet, to check, to curb, to stand up against him, we want arms of the same kind. I am far from objecting to the large military establishments which are proposed to you. I vote for them with all my heart. But, for the purpose of coping with Bonaparte, one great commanding spirit is worth them all. This is my undisguised opinion. But when I state this opinion thus undisguisedly, is my Right Hon. Friend (Mr. Pitt) to be implicated in a charge of prompting what I say? . . . .

"Sir, of all the imputations to which that Right Hon. gentleman could be subjected, I confess I did think that of intrigue and cabal the least likely to be preferred against him by any man who has witnessed his public conduct. . . . No, Sir. Never did young Ambition, just struggling into public notice and aiming at popular favour, labour with half so much earnestness to court reputation and to conciliate adherents, as my Right Hon. Friend has laboured since his retreat from office not to attract, but to repel; not to increase the number of his followers, but to dissolve attachment and to transfer support. And if, whatever has been his endeavour to insulate and individualize himself in political life, he has not been able to succeed wholly, even with those who would sacrifice to his wishes everything but their attachment to him—if with the public he has succeeded not at all, what is the inference? what but that, retreat and withdraw as much as he will, he must not hope to efface the memory of his past services from the gratitude of his

country?—he cannot withdraw himself from the following of a nation; he must endure the attachment of a people whom he has saved."

This most remarkable debate lasted till near four in the morning. Never, perhaps, I may say in passing, were any two statesmen more evenly matched in wit, in eloquence, in genius, or in that restlessness of temper—which is only too frequent as the satellite upon genius—than were Sheridan and Canning in the House of Commons.

Mr. Pitt at Bath received constant reports of the House of Commons from the letters of several friends, as Long, Ryder, and Lord Camden. All of them agreed in high praise of Canning's speech, and Pitt requested Lord Malmesbury to tell the young orator that for his own part he was perfectly satisfied with it.[4] Passing then to the general turn of the debate, Pitt said that he readily forgave the *pretended* abuse Sheridan bestowed on him in consequence of the real abuse he dealt out to Fox. He admired the wit and humour of the speech, and joined heartily in the laugh upon Dr. Fell.

In the same conversation with Lord Malmesbury, Pitt went on to discuss the state of the country. He enlarged with evident pleasure on its vast resources. However great France may be (he said), we have a revenue equal to that of all Europe (he made it out as thirty-two millions sterling), a navy superior to that of all Europe, and a commerce as great as that of all

[4] Diaries of Lord Malmesbury, vol. iv. p. 146.

Europe. "And," he added laughingly, "*to make us quite gentlemen*, we have a debt as large as that of all Europe! If with these means we act wisely—with a just mixture of spirit and forbearance—and if we can protract the evil of war for a few years, war will be an evil much less felt. . . . For myself, I am disposed to think that now I may be allowed, at least for a little while longer, to enjoy quiet."

On the same afternoon that this conversation passed, as Lord Malmesbury proceeds to tell it in his Diary, "Pitt, Lord Mulgrave, and Colonel Stanley dined with me. Nobody could be more cheerful or more companionable than he was after dinner; and upstairs with Lady Malmesbury and my daughters, as usual we played at *Speculation*."—*Speculation*, I may observe, was then a fashionable round-game at cards.

Lord Malmesbury did not fail to apprise Mr. Canning of the conversation that had passed, and he received from him the following reply:—

Mr. Canning to Lord Malmesbury.

"Conduit Street, Dec. 14, 1802.

. . . . . "I like your general account of Pitt, but not the particular expression of his wish for a long period of inaction. Sooner or later he *must* act, or the country is gone. All the appearances of the present moment, I am persuaded, are false and hollow. The tone is assumed but to answer the pressure of the moment, and nothing is really at bottom but concession—concession—concession. Will Pitt be thus satisfied? God forbid!

"G. C."

Pitt at this time was not quite stationary. He paid several short visits from Bath, but again returned to it. He went again to his mother's at Burton Pynsent—the last time that he ever saw her. He went to Lord and Lady Bath's at their fine seat of Longleat—perhaps the finest seat in the south of England. On his departure from that visit Lord Bath's horses conveyed his carriage to Shepton Mallet; it was market-day, and the people there insisted on taking off the horses and drawing him to the inn. It was the sudden outburst of their own honest enthusiasm, since there had not been the smallest notice or preparation for his coming.

Pitt went also for two nights to Lord and Lady Bathurst's at Cirencester. There, as at Longleat, he met Lord Malmesbury and his daughters, and the party were wont in the evening to resume with much zest their favourite *Speculation*.

In the course of this month there were several things to indispose Mr. Pitt with the Ministry. In the first place, some sharp attacks upon him appeared in the *Times*. That paper (first established in January, 1788) had not yet attained its present high pre-eminence; but even then it exercised a considerable influence upon the public mind. The Editor—so Mr. Rose informs us—was in habits of constant intercourse with Mr. Hiley Addington.[5] Hence, as was alleged, Mr. Addington the Minister received the constant praises of this journal, but might at the same time be deemed responsible for any political invective which it contained.

[5] Diaries of Mr. Rose, vol. i. p. 509.

Here are some extracts from one article of great ability, which appeared on the 2nd of December.

The Incapable Men.

It thus begins:—

"Those who have never entertained a high opinion of 'the Family Politics,' and think it possible for a State to be saved without a Grenville, will only laugh at the late *extempore* confessions of that disappointed party. The public has not forgotten the stupendous nonsense that followed their resignation, when the public were congratulated that the persons who had just gone out of office were, *ex-officio*, at the head of affairs. At this time it was the pert affectation of the *ex-officio* to speak of their successors as men unknown to the country (as if no Ministers could be too well known!)"

And, after a series of mock-attacks upon the Ministers, it thus concludes:—

"There is a kind of cowardice in setting one's wits against men so incapable, but the love for our country and for truth extorts from our reluctant feelings one other charge, so heinous and important that it is impossible to suppress it; namely—that they are incapable, after enjoying for a term of years the honours and emoluments of power and office, their Sovereign's favour, and the confidence of their countrymen, of deserting their post in the hour of danger, upon some frivolous pretext, or for some mysterious intrigue, which they have not the courage to explain, and which could

not have operated upon men of courage, or men anxious for character: that they were incapable of desiring their offices for their own advantage at a time when office was so perilous as to have ceased to have charms for the insatiable ambition of others; and that they are incapable of resigning them at the factious bidding of any one whom their happy and successful services may have made repent his own crime or folly in abandoning them."

Mr. Rose was much incensed at this article in the *Times*, and he states that, after conversing with him, Mr. Pitt became so too. The misstatement as to Pitt's resignation seemed the more reprehensible if in any degree prompted or even countenanced by members of the new administration who knew the real facts of the case. Pitt declared that he would write to Steele, desiring he would say to Addington that, unless the calumny was disavowed as publicly as it had been put forth, he (Mr. Pitt) must consider it as sanctioned by the Minister. But on further reflection Pitt gave up the idea of any such communication.

On the 8th Addington brought forward his Budget—and here again was a cause of much displeasure to Pitt. In the first place, there was announced a loan of ten millions for the financial year; and how was this to be reconciled with the words put into the King's mouth only a fortnight before? Next, and even before the Budget, the Minister, instead of dealing with the deficiency forthwith, proposed the fallacious expedient of Exchequer Bills. "I am the more surprised at it," said Pitt to Rose, "because I have repeatedly stated to

him the indispensable necessity of providing at once for any extraordinary expenses which might occur in years of peace. Addington always admitted the principle, and gave me the strongest assurances that he would on no occasion nor in any emergency depart from it."

It does not seem requisite in this place to examine at full length the financial statement of Addington. His biographer acknowledges that at the time it provoked a great deal of hostile criticism. As he owns, "it was charged with being boastful, invidious to his predecessors in office, and materially erroneous in a part of its details."[6] There was one expression in it—perhaps only a chance one—that gave much offence to Pitt. It was where the Minister complimented his colleague, Lord St. Vincent, for his "economical management," which Pitt thought a reflection on Dundas; for Dundas had been Treasurer of the Navy.

But although Pitt may have thought so, it is clear that Dundas himself did not. Undoubtedly he would else have declined to receive at this very period a considerable favour from the Government. Now, on the 21st of December there was published in the *Gazette* his elevation to the peerage, with the title of Viscount Melville. In talking to Rose upon this intelligence, Pitt said that he was beyond measure surprised at it. "I have not," he added, "heard one syllable from him on the subject since we parted in the summer; indeed, I have had no letter from him for some months. But what is most extraordinary, Dundas when I last saw

[6] Life of Lord Sidmouth, by Dean Pellew, vol. ii. p. 101.

him stated to me a variety of reasons why it was impossible for him to accept a peerage."

It is certainly a little strange that Lord Melville should not have announced his new position to his constant friend and recent chief. But no blame whatever can attach to him for reconsidering any family reasons that may have stood in the way of his peerage, and for accepting an honour which his long and able public services had most amply earned. I may add that for some months past there had been a considerable approximation between him and Addington. In the summer of 1802 he had consented to manage the elections north of Tweed on behalf of the Ministers, and had done so with his wonted skill and success; and in the February following there was a strong rumour that he was about to join their ranks as First Lord of the Admiralty.[7]

At the Christmas holidays the two Houses adjourned to the beginning of February, and on the 22nd of December Lord Castlereagh arrived at Bath. His object was to see Mr. Pitt, and the two statesmen had a long conversation. Lord Castlereagh said that great difficulties had arisen respecting the disposal of Malta, and that there was now an idea to leave the nomination of a Grand Master to the Pope. Of this scheme Mr. Pitt expressed his decided disapprobation. At the same time he told his Noble Friend that from the statements he had seen of the Budget he was convinced that Addington had made great mistakes.

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[7] Lord Grenville to Lord Buckingham, Feb. 15, 1801.

It may be observed that the differences which then and subsequently arose between Pitt and Addington were much aggravated and inflamed by some of their respective friends. On Pitt's side we have seen that from the very outset Canning, Rose, and the Bishop of Lincoln most especially, were in the highest degree hostile to Addington. So early as the close of 1801 I find the Bishop apply in private to that Minister, and I think most unjustly—the words "such incompetency and such knavery."[8] On Addington's side the evidence is not equally clear. But there seems strong reason to believe that he was often stirred against his predecessor by his brother Mr. Hiley Addington, and his brother-in-law Mr. Charles Bragge. To both these relatives he was warmly attached. To both he showed the same mistaken kindness as had Mr. Pitt to Lord Chatham, by seeking to place them in high office. Yet both, though very respectable men, were in truth characterised by utter mediocrity of mind. Now, as I have often had occasion to observe in public life, the evil of placing men of mediocrity in high office is by no means merely to be measured by the incompetent discharge of their official duty. It makes them resist and oppose as far as possible the entrance into a like employment of any higher genius. They are striving to pull down the whole administration to the same stupid level as their own.

On the 24th of December Pitt bid farewell to Bath, and set off to pass the Christmas with George Rose, at Cuffnells. The latter notes:—"During the three days

[8] Letter to Mr. Rose, Dec. 23, 1801.

Mr. Pitt was here we carefully went through all the papers on finance necessary to consider Mr. Addington's statement on opening his Budget, and he agreed with me entirely in all my conclusions, going away perfectly persuaded that the whole of these statements were founded on gross errors. . . . He conceived too that it would be impossible for him to avoid delivering his thoughts on the subject in the House of Commons." From another passage it appears that Pitt estimated the miscalculation at no less than 2,800,000*l.* a-year.

On Monday, the 27th, the retired Minister travelled forward to Lord Malmesbury's, and in the Diary of his new host we find:—"Pitt came to Park Place about seven in the evening, to a late dinner. Mr. Elliot was the only person in the house besides my daughters and Fitzharris. Pitt was the pleasantest companion possible at and after dinner, whether conversing with us or with them, and we sat up, without any reference to public concerns, till near one o'clock."

On the day ensuing Canning and Lord Morpeth joined the party from London. "I wished, however," says Lord Malmesbury, "that the conversation should be still general, and I warded off all politics by playing very joyously at *Speculation* till bed-time."

Next day nevertheless Mr. Pitt, before he took leave of his host, entered fully upon politics, and above all foreign politics. "The great question now for us," he said, "is how *to bear and to forbear*. If peace can be preserved but for four or five years, our revenue would be so far improved that we might without fear look in the face of such a war as we have just ended. Nothing should super-

sede that consideration except that which ought to supersede everything—a gross national insult, or an open act of hostility—or such an attempt at aggrandizement on the part of France as would in effect comprise both."

At one o'clock on that same day, the 29th, Pitt and Canning went on together to Dropmore. "Nothing very material passed"—such was subsequently Canning's account of this visit. Lord Grenville, writing to his brother, the Marquis, represents Mr. Pitt as grown more alienated in opinion from the Ministers, although still disposed to treat them with the utmost tenderness.[9]

In the mean time Addington being apprised by Lord Castlereagh of his conversations at Bath, had written to Pitt more than once, earnestly pressing to see him as soon as he arrived in town.

Here is Pitt's reply:—

"MY DEAR SIR, "Dropmore, Dec. 30, 1802.

"I received your letter just before I left Rose's, from whence, by a slow progress, I arrived here yesterday, after calling at Park Place on my way. I am going on to-morrow or next day to Long's, where I shall probably remain for two or three days, and shall, therefore, hardly be in town before the middle of the week. I hope then to have the opportunity of seeing you, and I defer till then saying anything on the state and prospects of public affairs, on which I fear there are many points to which I cannot help looking forward with regret and anxiety.

"Yours affectionately,

"W. P."

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[9] Courts and Cabinets of George III., vol. iii. p. 243.

On Saturday, which was New Year's Day, Pitt and Canning left Dropmore in company, and separated at Cranford Bridge, Canning on his way to town, and Pitt to Long's house on Bromley Hill. On Wednesday, the 5th, he went to Addington's, at Richmond Lodge, where he remained that night. He found the Minister alone, and a good deal of conversation passed between them, not free from much adverse criticism on Pitt's side, but conducted on both in an amicable tone.

From Richmond Pitt went to his own house in Park Place, then again to Bromley Hill, and then to Lord Camden's seat of Wilderness, near Sevenoaks. From Wilderness he returned once more to London, and proceeded again for one night to Richmond Lodge. "He does not look well"—so wrote Addington to Hiley—"but his strength is evidently improved, and his spirits and appetite are good." In this visit, or perhaps, but less probably, in the one preceding, a remarkable incident occurred. Some weeks later it was related by Pitt himself, talking in confidence to Rose; and I shall here transcribe the passage in which it is recorded:

"Mr. Pitt told me that when he was in town, after Christmas, he dined and slept at Mr. Addington's, in Richmond Park; that they were alone the whole afternoon and evening, and a considerable part of the next morning, in all which time Mr. A. never dropped the remotest hint about Mr. Pitt returning to office; but in the chaise, coming into town, when they had reached Hyde Park, Mr. A., in a very embarrassed manner, entered on the subject by saying that if Lord Grenville had not stated the indispensable necessity of Mr. Pitt

coming into office to carry on the Government, he should have been disposed himself to propose his return to administration; and followed that up in a way that rendered it impossible for Mr. Pitt to remain silent. He therefore said that whenever it should be thought there was a necessity for his returning to office, he should consider very attentively how far it would be right and proper for him to do so; and in such an event he should first desire to know what His Majesty's wishes might be on the subject, and that he should not decide without knowing the opinion of Mr. A. and his colleagues about it. It appeared, from Mr. Addington having delayed this conversation till this time, within ten minutes or a quarter of an hour before their separation, and from the extreme embarrassment he was under during it, that he felt reluctant and awkward in beginning it, and that he wished it to be of no long continuance."

A few days after this interview with Addington, Pitt took his departure for Walmer Castle. The two statesmen did not meet again for many weeks.

One of the earliest letters from Pitt at Walmer was to Rose, recapitulating the conversations which had recently passed at Richmond or in London, and entreating his friend to forego an intention which Rose had just expressed, to come forward in the House of Commons and deliver a reply in detail to Addington's financial statement of the 10th of December last.

Here are the principal passages of this letter, which, I may add, was entirely successful in its object.

"DEAR ROSE, "Walmer Castle, Jan. 28, 1803.

. . . . . "You know already how prone people have been to think that they could collect my intentions from the declarations of persons whose relation to me in no degree justified such an inference; and you must, I am sure, feel how much more this would apply to any thing said by you, on any subject, and especially on that in question. It would be in vain to attempt to persuade the world that there was no concert between us, unless I were prepared to take a line directly contrary to yours, which is so far from being possible, that, on the contrary, I must, on the first proper opportunity, take precisely the same line myself. Do not imagine, therefore, that I either want, out of tenderness to Government, to prevent the discussion, or that I conceive it would be possible to do so, if I ever so much wished it. What I do wish is, that when I must be forced to declare an opinion which cannot fail to produce such effects on the credit of the Government, that opinion should come directly from myself, and not be collected from any other person. I feel this the more strongly because I have already stated my sentiments distinctly to Addington, and apprised him that unless he can convince me that his original statement is right, and my objections to it are erroneous, it will be impossible for me to suffer the public to continue under a delusion on so important a point. Having received no attempt towards explanation before I left town, I talked over the whole subject with Steele, and repeated to him my intentions, that he might state them again to Addington. I probably shall hear from him before long, but I am perfectly confident nothing can be said on the real truth of the case that can materially vary our statement. I wait chiefly to see whether they

admit their error, and are ready to take the steps which *the real state* of the income and expenditure requires, or whether they mean to persist and justify. If the former, I shall certainly wish to add as little as possible (as far as depends upon me) to the pain and discredit of such a retractation, and to give every facility in my power to such measures as are adequate to the necessity of our situation. If the latter, the task of exposing their blunders will be more disagreeable both to me and them, but must at all events be executed, both for the sake of my own character and the deep public interests involved. At all events, my present notion is to take the first opportunity (probably on the discussion either of the repeal of the Convoy Duty or the Malt Tax) to give my general opinion on the state of our finance, and to be regulated by the circumstances I have referred to in the further measures I may pursue. . . . . .

"Ever sincerely yours,

"W. PITT."

In this Chapter it has been my object to lay before the reader as fully and as fairly as I could the first steps of the alienation which so soon afterwards ensued between Pitt and Addington. As it seems to me, that alienation in all its parts is perfectly consistent not only with the personal honour and good faith, but also with the public spirit and the friendly inclination, of both parties. Their difference arose from causes which might have been foreseen, but which could not be averted. When a man of moderate abilities is placed at the head of affairs, and when another man of first-rate genius in politics is standing at his side, it must happen that the former will commit some faults which the latter will

not be slow to see. A sense of public duty must in the long run impel the independent statesman to make known—if he can, to correct; if he cannot, to oppose—any great error of the Ministerial measures. Nor can it be avoided that in times of danger and affright the nation should anxiously turn from the lesser politician to the great one. All this is in practice inconsistent with the maintenance of personal friendship; but all this arises only from the vice of the original arrangement, in which, through the complications of politics, the true position of talent was inverted.

APPENDIX.

APPENDIX.

LETTERS AND EXTRACTS OF LETTERS FROM KING GEORGE THE THIRD TO MR. PITT.

Windsor, Dec. 8, 1796.

I feel much pleasure at Mr. Pitt's note, as it contains the agreeable information that the proposal for the Loan and the Taxes for the annual interest met with unanimous approbation. I own I would have wished, considering the desire for subscribing, that the Loan had been for 2,000,000*l.*, as that would probably have covered all the expenses of the year. I hope Mr. Pitt will no longer let the Extraordinaries due to my Electoral troops remain unpaid. It is dreadful, the cries of poor officers and widows who are really almost starving for want of their dues; and it is impossible to talk of the credit of the country, while, on the contrary, many individuals are exclaiming at these losses. I have this week signed Warrants for the Hessians and Brunswickers, and think my Electoral subjects have an equal claim to justice. G. R.

Windsor, Feb. 26, 1797.

I suppose the predatory attack and landing in Pembrokeshire will rather add to the dismay of the timid. But I trust that cool firmness which used to be the natural attendant of Englishmen will again appear.

February 28, 1797.

If we are true to ourselves, and will act with vigour, and not be drawn into perplexities by the insidious advances of Prussia, which I have just read, I still hope we may bring matters to an honourable conclusion. But any negotiation for peace at this period would be destruction, for it would be entailing every evil we have been avoiding for a momentary ease.

March 4, 1797.

I believe the good news of yesterday will a little rouse the pusillanimous, and that we shall, as previous to the fatal 22nd of June, place some confidence in naval skill and British valour to supply want of numbers. I own I am too true an Englishman to have ever adopted the more modern and ignoble mode of expecting equal numbers on all occasions. When Mr. Pitt reads the instructions given by Hoche, he will, I am persuaded, feel as I do the wanton cruelty of the enemy, and equally rejoice that Lord Malmesbury's negotiation failed.

April 9, 1797.

The paper received this morning from Mr. Pitt would require much more time for meditation before any opinion was given on its purport than the press of the moment will admit, as it seems to allude to a decision of Cabinet being made on the measure in the course of this day, and I am desirous Mr. Pitt should communicate to them my view of the subject previous to their forming any final opinion: I therefore desire my sentiments may be canvassed without attending to the irregular mode in which they are stated, as it was impossible to arrange them properly when placed so rapidly on paper.

Before I enter upon the serious subject that has been this morning brought before me, one natural reflection occurs—the lamenting the mode, but too often adopted of late years, of acting immediately on the impulse of the minute, consequently not giving that cool examination which, perhaps, in more instances than one, might have been beneficial to the service.

I think this country has taken every humiliating step for seeking peace the warmest advocates for that object could suggest, and they have met with a conduct from the enemy, bordering on contempt, that I hoped would have prevented any further attempt of the same nature; from my fear of destroying every remaining spark of vigour in this once firm nation.

The news from Italy is certainly unfavourable, but too recent for us to build any sound opinion upon till further information arrives from Vienna; and certainly the language Sir Morton Eden holds looks as if the Emperor still inclines to continue the conflict, without which he must make excessive sacrifices. Would it not, therefore, be wise to wait for further accounts before we cast a die that, I fear, must for ever close the glory of this country, and reduce Austria to a small state in comparison of her situation before this conflict; besides fixing the present wicked constitution of France on a solid ground of more extent and preponderancy in the scale of Europe than the most exaggerated ideas of Lewis XIV. ever presumed to form?

If the Low Countries remain in the possession of France, and the former United Provinces continue a dependent state on the former, one may talk of balances of power, but they cannot exist; and the same chain of reasoning that will admit the above measures will, I fear, not prevent France from adding all the territory between her and the banks of the Rhine to her possessions.

As to the state of our finances, it is impossible for me to decide how far they will enable us to assist Austria. I flattered myself, after the debate on Tuesday, Mr. Pitt had viewed that measure as not difficult; but should that prove otherwise, and reduce Austria to sue for peace, I own I should rather see her make a separate peace, as that would leave us at liberty to make one with less sacrifices than if we are to make a joint negotiation, where our acquisitions must be employed to regain the territories of Austria.

I find my thoughts run on so much that I shall in the evening send some further reflections to Mr. Pitt.

G. R.

Mr. Pitt to the King.

Downing Street, April 9, 1797.

Mr. Pitt did not fail to obey your Majesty's commands in laying this day before the Cabinet the paper which your Majesty had the goodness to communicate to him. It was impossible that they should not be strongly impressed with the weight and importance of the considerations it suggests, and deeply sensible of the dignified feelings and gracious condescension which dictated it; but a sense of the over-ruling necessity arising out of the present circumstances at home and abroad has made them feel it an indispensable though painful duty to submit to your Majesty the opinions expressed in the Minute which your Majesty will receive from Lord Grenville.

Mr. Pitt can with truth assure your Majesty that his present opinion, as far as it depends upon recent events, is nevertheless not formed without cool and repeated deliberations. It rests, however, much more on what has been long the object of his anxious attention, the gradual and increasing difficulties of

finance, the real and serious hazard which may arise from their being further augmented, as well as the effect of the impressions which they may be too likely to produce in Parliament and with the public. The obstructions which these difficulties have already occasioned to pecuniary succours to Austria, the precarious footing on which they must place the continuance of these succours, added to the apparent embarrassment and extreme military risk to which that Power is exposed, though they may not render the chance of its co-operation desperate, seem to make it impossible to place any reliance on it. In this situation Mr. Pitt also feels that a separate peace concluded by Austria, instead of diminishing would increase the expenses of this country, while it would at the same time tend still more to alarm and dispirit the country, and probably leave it no adequate resources for the struggle, without having recourse to means which are to be looked to only in the last extremity, and which are likely to be supported only in proportion as all prudent steps have been used to avoid the necessity.

Mr. Pitt cannot, therefore, disguise his sincere conviction that the means now suggested are absolutely indispensable to avoid risking too nearly the ultimate and permanent safety and peace of this country itself. In this opinion he knows that none concur more decidedly than those of your Majesty's servants who have been most anxious to resist while they thought it possible the sacrifices now proposed; they can now reconcile these sacrifices to their minds on no other ground than the public necessity on which it seems to them to rest; nor could they at any rate bring themselves to be the advisers and instruments of such measures if they did not feel themselves bound, both from public duty and from gratitude and devotion to your Majesty, to submit to any

personal difficulty or mortification rather than risk the existence of the present system of administration, as long as your Majesty deigns to consider its continuance as important to your personal ease and satisfaction, or to the general interests of your kingdom.

April 10, 1797.

On receiving Mr. Pitt's note yesterday evening, with the account that, though reluctantly, the Cabinet had unanimously agreed to a Minute conformable to the paper he had sent me in the morning, I thought it right not to continue the second paper I was preparing. I shall certainly not with less sorrow acquiesce in the measure, as one thought by the Ministers of necessity, not choice; and Mr. Pitt will, I am certain, not be surprised that the opinion which encouraged me to withstand the difficulties of the war is personally not changed; but I am conscious that if that remains a single one, I cannot but acquiesce in a measure that from the bottom of my heart I deplore; and should the evils I foresee not attend the measure, I shall be most happy to avow that I have seen things in a blacker light than the event has proved.

I am certain Mr. Pitt's mind is not less hurt than mine on the occasion, and that he has had many unhappy minutes previous to forming his present opinion. The die being now cast, we must look forward, and both must do their best to put this country in as good a state by attention, and not by trying new schemes which mislead, and thus preserve a Constitution which has been the admiration of ages.

G. R.

May 9, 1797, 7·50 A.M.

When I returned from the play the last night, I found Mr. Pitt's note on my table; but not having read

the papers from the Admiralty, I was entirely ignorant of the very outrageous mutiny that has a second time broke out in the Channel fleet. I have since read the papers, and cannot in the least form an opinion as to what measures may be necessary for restoring discipline, or what more can with propriety be done than the increase of pay and provisions that has been now fully granted: I shall, therefore, very willingly concur in such opinion as may be suggested by the Cabinet on the present very distressing occasion.

G. R.

May 11, 1797.

Mr. Pitt's note of the last evening is a fresh proof of the unwarrantable conduct of the leaders of Opposition; the smallest degree of public spirit ought to have prevented the bringing forward any censure at this hour, when silence was the only line proper. The accounts from Portsmouth, though highly unpleasant, yet certainly bear a better aspect than two days ago was expected. I hope, therefore, that the arrival of Earl Howe this day will prove very conducive to restore some degree of order.

G. R.

Mr. Pitt to the King.

Downing Street, Sept. 22, 1797.

Mr. Pitt thinks it his duty humbly to acquaint your Majesty that he has received communications from a person (who produces as strong proofs as can in the nature of the case be given of the authenticity of his mission) stating that notwithstanding what has passed at Lisle, the Directory will still agree to an immediate peace, giving to this country both the Cape and Ceylon, on condition of their receiving a large sum of money for their own use. The sum named is

1,200,000*l.* for Ceylon, and *two millions* for both. He undertakes that as a further proof of the authenticity of his mission, a conciliatory answer shall be returned to the note now sent from hence to Lisle, and that he will bring or send a copy of it from Paris hither before it comes from Lisle. And he desires no payment of any sort till after the signature of the treaty.

Mr. Pitt has mentioned the outline and substance of the proposal to all your Majesty's servants who are in town. The particulars, excepting names, are known to the Secretaries of State and to Lord Chatham. The names are known only to Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas. It is impossible not to consider any transaction of this sort as liable to great uncertainty; but in such a state of things as that now prevailing in France, Mr. Pitt and all those whom he has consulted think the overture not destitute of probability, and the experiment worth trying, as such a sum would be well employed indeed to procure peace on our own terms without the risk and expense of another campaign. It seems, however, essential that such a business should be conducted with the utmost secrecy at present; and that if it succeeds, every possible precaution should, in point of honour, be employed to prevent as far as possible the circumstance being fixed on the French Government. Suspicion cannot be avoided, and (as might be expected from the present state of that country) seems to be little feared. And it has been distinctly explained to the person through whom the proposal comes, that enough must be stated to Parliament, in order to procure the grant of the money, to satisfy them that it was really employed for secret service on the Continent, with a view to the settlement of peace. Mr. Pitt is aware that the measure is quite singular in its extent, and of doubtful success; but it seems attended with

little risk of mischief, and worth trying in these extraordinary times. He hopes, therefore, your Majesty will not disapprove of its having been thought right, as time pressed, to encourage the proposal.

Windsor, Sept. 23, 1797.

The demand of money is enormous, and must require so explicit a declaration to Parliament to exculpate Ministers that [it] cannot fail, and I trust will, leave on men's minds a due suspicion of the use that has been made, though it is absolutely necessary to say as little as the novelty of the occasion will permit. I certainly do not mean to prevent Mr. Pitt from encouraging the informer by assurances of the reward if the business is fully done, and no demand of restoring ships, or any alterations in our naval or commercial laws.

Windsor, Nov. 11, 1797.

It is impossible to receive more satisfaction than I have experienced at the receipt of Mr. Pitt's note, as it contains an assurance of the spirit expressed by the whole House of Commons on the subject of the Address, which undoubtedly promises the most active exertion in every measure that may be required for the public safety. I hope these will be cautiously considered before they are brought forward, for to some of those of the last year I fear may be in great measure attributed the mutiny of the navy, and the total failure of recruiting the army. I own I am still sanguine, if we will profit by the experience we have had, and act firmly, that the resources of the enemy are so totally exhausted, and the enmity now arising between Bonaparte and the Directory of France so likely to occasion incalculable events, that with the attempt now making

towards Russia and Prussia, there is a foundation to expect a more honourable conclusion of the war and the prospect at a proper time of a more lasting peace than the last year had promised.

G. R.

Windsor, Dec. 15, 1797.

Considering the kind of clamour Opposition is attempting to make against the Bill respecting the Assessed Taxes, I think the division of last night of 175 to 50 very favourable. I hope Mr. Pitt will be cautious, not to admit any modifications in the Committee on Monday that can possibly lessen the value of the measure; for experience has fully taught me that when Government have from too much candour greatly weakened the effect of any proposition, it never renders it more palatable, and constantly destroys the value of it.

No one can dissemble that the occasion requires heavy contributions, but the cause is so great; it is to save every thing that is dear to men, and therefore must be met with firmness, for I believe the mode adopted is the most equal that could have been devised.

G. R.

Windsor, Jan. 5, 1798.

I have this instant received Mr. Pitt's account of the principle of the Bill for the Assessed Taxes having been carried by a division of 204 to 75, and the Third Reading by 198 to 71, and that no further opposition will be made to this measure in the House of Commons, but that a few trifling amendments must be made this day. By this the great point is carried of introducing a new mode of taxation that may be of great utility to the

finances of the country, though I doubt whether the actual Bill has been improved by the alterations that have taken place in the progress of it, for I believe Mr. Pitt brought it forward on solid ground, and that the changes must have rendered the Bill less agreeable to it; but sometimes, unfortunately, right gives way to expedience: when it does, I am ever hurt; for, as a plain man, I think right and wrong ought never to be blended for any momentary purpose, and try to inculcate that principle as much as possible.

G. R.

January 23, 1798.

I am ever sorry when any proposition is made to me on which I cannot give a decided answer: the one now brought to me by Mr. Pitt is certainly of that nature; but, as I have no secret on the occasion, I shall certainly state the matter so fully to him that he can as easily as me point out what *ought* to be done; for if there is no means of effecting what is suggested, the *appearance* would certainly [be] ridiculous, when attended with an application to Parliament for the means.

My income is certainly, in proportion to the greatness of the country, inadequate to my station, for my Privy Purse at £60,000 and the expense of my Household is the only real income I possess. As to the former, I have some debts, of which the sum borrowed for the late elections makes the most considerable part, which I am by instalments paying off. As to the Household, Mr. Pitt knows how much that is in debt. I have no other fund in the world. I never drew a shilling from my Electorate when in its greatest prosperity, but regularly paid off the debts that were incurred in the Seven Years' War by the very unjust manner in which the just

demands on this country were withheld. I thought it prudent to call in a large mortgage, the interest of which was affixed on the keeping part of my Electoral troops: this I placed in trustees, the German Regency, to be placed in the Funds here, the interest of which goes regularly to Hanover, and I have never touched one sixpence of it, but let it answer its disposition, the payment of those regiments. Now I have been forced to borrow above two millions in Germany for my part of the army that forms the Cordon, and Mr. Pitt knows I have a large sum owing to me for the German troops whilst in English pay, that is as yet kept back here: with this he must see that whatever I could nominally subscribe can be but little, and must be again repaid me. I state this truly, and therefore leave him to judge what can be done. So far I can say, it must be out of my Civil List, to which my Privy Purse can give a small proportion. I am sorry to say the King of England is not so rich a man, and that every shilling taken from his Privy Purse must fall on the indigent; for if he has not the means, his workmen and the poor cannot but feel it to their sorrow.

G. R.

January 25, 1798.

I have had a satisfactory answer from Messrs. Drummond: I therefore lose no time in permitting Mr. Pitt to subscribe in my name 20,000*l.* in the Voluntary Loan, to be deducted in the following manner from my Privy Purse: the 5000*l.* usually paid on the 1st of April to be kept for the Loan, as also that of the 1st of July, the 1st of October, and 1st of January, 1799.

G. R.

February 1, 1798, 8·40 A.M.

I am sorry to find by Mr. Pitt's note that he is confined by indisposition. The Earl of Chatham yesterday mentioned Mr. Pitt's idea of the propriety of removing the Duke of Norfolk from the Lieutenancy of the West Riding of Yorkshire, and had my permission, as he intimated Mr. Pitt's not being able to come out, to express my thorough concurrence in the proposed removal. The Chancellor, whom I had previously seen, was strong of the same opinion: I therefore authorized Lord Grenville to desire the Duke of Portland at the Earl of Chatham's dinner to send the usual letter for that purpose to the Duke of Norfolk. I entirely agree with Mr. Pitt that the Earl Fitzwilliam is the most proper person for the Lieutenancy, but that whoever is appointed must previously know that he must remove the Duke of Norfolk by my command from Colonel of the 1st Regiment of West York Militia. Should Earl Fitzwilliam decline, which I do not expect, perhaps the Duke of Leeds might be the most proper person, as he would be glad of commanding the regiment, which would vacate the East York Lieutenancy, formerly held by the Earl of Carlisle, who naturally would again be appointed.

G. R.

February 1, 1798, 5 m. past midnight.

On coming to my room I have found Mr. Pitt's note. I am clear that the Earl of Westmorland's conduct in Ireland gives him the best claim to the office of Privy Seal, and that the Earl of Chesterfield cannot but feel gratified at being Master of the Horse, and that Lord Auckland will fill the vacancy in the Post Office very properly: I therefore authorise Mr. Pitt to take the necessary steps for effecting this arrangement.

G. R.

Windsor, May 13, 1798.

It gives me infinite satisfaction to find Mr. Pitt can recommend, on the vacancy of Master of Trinity College, a person, according to the character he gives me of Dr. Mansel, so exactly qualified to fill that arduous though honourable station. I flatter myself this appointment will restore discipline in that great seminary, and a more correct attachment to the Church of England and the British Constitution than the young men educated there for some time have been supposed to profess.

G. R.

May 30 (1798),[1] 7·43 P.M.

By the note I have just received from Mr. Pitt, I am sorry to find his not appearing to-day at St. James's was occasioned by the continuance of the complaint in the stomach. I fear it is some inclination to gout, and will probably not be entirely removed till a regular fit takes place.

I certainly said nothing to Lord Chatham but what my mind dictated, and I trust what has happened will never be repeated. Perhaps it could not have been avoided, but it is a sufficient reason to prevent its ever being again necessary. Public characters have no right to weigh alone what they owe to themselves; they must consider also what is due to their country.

G. R.

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[1] The original MS. of this letter bears the date of year 1797, in a perfectly clear hand. But this must have been a slip of the King's pen. It is evident that the first paragraph has in view the same illness of Mr. Pitt as the succeeding letter of June 4, 1798; and it is no less evident that the second paragraph must refer to the duel with Mr. Tierney.

June 4, 1798.

I return the Warrants which I have signed. I am sorry to find Mr. Pitt's complaint still continues; indeed I fear, without he will take the decision of going for a couple of weeks to Bath, that it will not be removed; that what he now takes can alone be termed palliatives, whilst those efficacious waters taken with caution would strike at the root of the disorder. I had desired both the Earl of Chatham and Lord Grenville to mention this to Mr. Pitt, but I would not omit so good an opportunity of doing it myself.

G. R.

Windsor, June 10, 1798.

I have signed the messages to Parliament for a Vote of Credit, which must at this time be a very necessary precaution.

By Mr. Pitt's not mentioning his health, I trust there is some amendment.

This country remains in a very naked state by the large detachment sent to Ireland, which nothing but the greatest necessity can justify; but I cannot think any forces sent there can be of real avail unless a military Lord Lieutenant, and that the Marquis of Cornwallis, with Mr. Pelham as his Secretary, be instantly sent there. The present Lord Lieutenant is too much agitated at the present hour, and totally under the control of the Irish Privy Councillors, whose hurry has been the real cause of the two failures, which, if repeated, will by degrees teach the Irish rebels to fight.

G. R.

Windsor, June 11, 1798.

Since the first breaking out of disturbances in Ireland I have not received so pleasant a moment as

the receipt of Mr. Pitt's letter, as it contains the Marquis Cornwallis's consent to accept the Lord Lieutenancy of Ireland. I trust Mr. Pitt will do his utmost to persuade Mr. Pelham to return as Secretary; no one could fill the office so well: but Lord Cornwallis must clearly understand that no indulgence can be granted to the Catholics farther than has been, I am afraid unadvisedly, done, in former Sessions, and that he must by a steady conduct effect in future the Union of that Kingdom with this. I trust that Lord Cornwallis will consent to be nominated in Council on Wednesday. I cannot help again urging that he as Lord Lieutenant, and Mr. Pelham as Secretary, is certainly the best arrangement.

G. R.

Windsor, June 26, 1798.

The draft of the intended Speech at the close of the Session seems very proper. I certainly shall be willing to attend the first day that the Parliament can be prorogued: if that is Friday, it will be as agreeable to me as any other.

I am sorry Mr. Pitt makes no mention of his health; but I must insist on his now not longer deferring taking such remedies as his physician may think most likely to reinstate it. I understand Cheltenham first, succeeded by Bath, is what he means to propose. If my information is just, I desire this may without delay be submitted to, for the allowing bile or unformed gout to undermine a constitution may lead to the most fatal consequences.

I write thus openly from the very great consequence of the subject, and that real affection I bear Mr. Pitt.

G. R.

Windsor, Nov. 17, 1798.

The draft of the intended Speech on opening the Session of Parliament on Tuesday fully answers my warmest expectations. I can assure Mr. Pitt if it equally calls forth the ardour of those to whom it is addressed as it has mine on perusing it, I am certain it will have the most salutary effect. I entirely coincide in opinion as to the propriety of not as yet alluding to a proposed union with Ireland. That the measure will, when it can be effected, prove salutary to both countries, cannot bear a doubt; but that it will not be obtained on either side of [the] water with the ease Mr. Pitt expects, I should fear will prove but too true.

G. R.

Windsor, Dec. 12, 1798.

Nothing can be more advantageous than that, by a motion of Mr. Tierney calculated to discountenance the making any fresh engagement on the Continent, the sense of the House of Commons should have been felt on this subject, and that Mr. Canning should have had so fair an opportunity of exerting his powers of oratory, and the motion have been negatived without a division; but I cannot conclude without highly approving that Mr. Pitt did not speak: it certainly was by no means necessary; it might have lessened the merit of Mr. Canning's performance; and the speech last week on the finances of the country was too excellent to require Mr. Pitt's holding forth till a more formidable opposition is made to the measures he must propose. I expect that on Friday more of them will attend, when he probably will find it necessary to exert himself, but with the heartfelt satisfaction that his endeavours are for the

good of the public—theirs for the destruction of all that is valuable.

G. R.

January 24, 1799.

It is impossible to calculate the improprieties of Mr. Sheridan; or his having taken up the last evening the time of the House of Commons in objecting to an Address that merely expresses that attention which every Message observes, and which binds the House of Commons to no specific measure, would seem extraordinary.

Mr. Tyrrwhitt Jones seems to have got that habit of holding forth on every occasion that I suppose he could not withstand the pleasure of hearing himself, whilst the Opposition in the House of Commons is not more formidable. I think the great measure now coming forward rather gains respect by the transactions of yesterday.

I cannot help at the same time expressing to Mr. Pitt some surprise at having seen in a letter from Lord Castlereagh to the Duke of Portland on Monday an idea of an established stipend by the authority of Government for the Catholic Clergy of Ireland. I am certain any encouragement to such an idea must give real offence to the Established Church in Ireland, as well as to the true friends of our Constitution; for it is certainly creating a second Church establishment, which could not but be highly injurious. The tolerating Dissenters is fair; but the trying to perpetuate a separation in religious opinions by providing for the support of their clergy as an establishment is certainly going far beyond the bounds of justice or policy.

G. R.

Weymouth, Sept. 25, 1799.

This morning I have received the draft of the Speech to be delivered to-morrow. It seems very proper for the occasion. As to any great event arising in Holland previous to my delivering it to-morrow, I cannot say I think there is much reason to expect it. The country the troops have to pass through is much intersected, and if the enemy avails himself of these natural difficulties, our advance must be slow. I believe the passing the duties substituted for the Land Tax and the Malt Tax will prove a salutary measure; and if all the despatch that can be used is exerted, that it will not long delay the Session, which is certainly very desirable.

G. R.

Windsor, Feb. 10, 1800.

Having signed the accompanying warrant, I forward it to Mr. Pitt. I have looked with interest at the new publication of Mr. Marsh, and have inquired of Dr. Fisher, who was of St. John's College, concerning him, who assures me he is a man of considerable learning and talents; that he is the particular friend of Dr. Cookson: therefore any further inquiry Mr. Pitt may wish to make can be easily obtained through the channel of Mr. Wilberforce.

G. R.

Windsor, April 26, 1800.

Mr. Pitt's account of the fate of Mr. Grey's motion for an instruction to the Committee on the Irish Articles of Union to provide for the independence of Parliament, meaning a Parliamentary Reform, is most satisfactory, as it shows the wisdom of the House of Commons on that fallacious subject.

The fourth Article of Union having passed without division, after a short discussion, I should hope, indicates that with diligence this business may be speedily concluded and returned to Ireland.

G. R.

May 6, 1800.

The information of the last night from Mr. Pitt that all the resolutions on the Articles of Union with Ireland had been agreed to by the House of Commons, and ordered to be communicated to the House of Lords with an Address, laying them before me, gives me sincere satisfaction: I therefore trust there can now be no doubt that either on Thursday, or at latest on Friday, I shall receive the joint Address of the two Houses, which will, I trust, effect one of the most useful measures that has been effected during my reign, one that will give stability to the whole empire, and from the want of industry and capital in Ireland be but little felt by this country as diminishing its trade and manufactures. For the advantages to Ireland can only arise by slow degrees, and the wealth of Great Britain will undoubtedly, by furnishing the rest of the globe with its articles of commerce, not feel any material disadvantage in that particular from the future prosperity of Ireland.

G. R.

Windsor, June 18, 1800.

As to the regulations proposed in the office of Clerks of the House of Commons, I fully authorize Mr. Pitt to give my consent to the Bill proposed, as it has the approbation of the worthy and excellent Speaker of the House, who would not countenance the measure if not advantageous to the public.

Windsor, June 28, 1800.

Nothing can be more true or just than the ground on which Mr. Pitt objected to Mr. Sheridan's motion, and the House of Commons showed their concurrence in that opinion by the great majority for rejecting the Call. For the same reason I own not approving of the Minute of Cabinet of Thursday, as it will encourage Austria in treating with the enemy instead of in making exertions to recover the mischief that may have arisen, but of which we do not at present know the true extent. No disaster can make me think the treating for peace either wise or safe whilst the French principles subsist. An armed neutrality is the only thing that can be obtained, and that I look upon as most fatal, for no confidence can be placed in the present French Government. My opinion is formed on principle, not on events, and therefore is not open to change.

G. R.

Windsor, July 19, 1800.

Since my note to Mr. Pitt from the Great Lodge, I have received from the Bishop of St. David's an explicit acceptance of the Primacy of Ireland, which I look upon as essential to the quiet of the Irish Established Church, and to the promotion of religion and virtue in that island. I believe nothing but my own exertion on this occasion could have effected this right measure.

Windsor, Oct. 11, 1800.

My opinion fully coincides with Mr. Pitt's on the propriety of meeting the Parliament on the 11th of November, for the sake of examining what may be necessary to be done with regard to the high prices of corn and provisions. I hope on canvassing the ques-

tion fully, that no strong measures will be attempted, for I hear what was done the last Session rather increased the evil.

G. R.

November 28, 1800.

It gives me infinite pleasure to find by Mr. Pitt's account that Mr. Tierney's motion for a Committee on the State of the Nation was rejected by 154 to 37, which cannot but be of use both at home and abroad: indeed, I have not the smallest doubt of the good sense of the country at large, and that however the weight of taxes may be felt, that every one judges that in the present state of France no secure peace can be made, and that consequently the continuance of the war is highly necessary.

The strange conduct of the Emperor of Russia in a second time laying an embargo on the British trade from his dominions loudly calls for the measure of a prohibition from the Privy Council to the merchants trading [with] Russia from answering any bills of exchange from that empire, which Lord Grenville proposed the last night to me, in consequence of which I have desired him to give notice that I will hold a Privy Council here at as early an hour as may be convenient, that the merchants may acquaint their correspondents by this night's post of the injunction under which they are placed.

G. R.

Windsor, Dec. 18, 1800.

The application forwarded to me by Mr. Pitt's note of the Marquis of Buckingham's request that I would grant an Irish Barony of Nugent to the Marchioness of Buckingham, with a remainder to her second son, on

whom the Marquis will settle his Irish estate, meets with my approbation; but I trust the Irish estate will at the same time be settled on Lord George Grenville, not left to future disposition.

G. R.

Jan. 23, 1801.

The general tone as well as matter of my proposed Speech for Tuesday meets with my fullest approbation, and no amount of exertion shall be wanting in me to deliver it with the force it deserves. I trust, therefore, that Mr. Pitt will not make any material alteration in it, and that I shall find it as perfect when, on Monday, it will be communicated here to the Cabinet as it has come this morning from him.

G. R.

A.[1]

Mr. Pitt to the King.

Downing Street, Saturday, Jan. 31, 1801.

Mr. Pitt would have felt it, at all events, his duty, previous to the meeting of Parliament, to submit to your Majesty the result of the best consideration which your confidential servants could give to the important ques-

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[1] The following letters, marked A, B, C, and D, are those which were transcribed by Lord Kenyon in 1801, and published by Dr. Philpotts in 1827. The three subsequent ones, not hitherto printed, of Feb. 16, 18, and 20, concluded the correspondence for upwards of three years; the King's next letter in the series bearing date May 5, 1804.

The note of Feb. 18, 1801, beginning "My dear Pitt," is the only one of the whole series which thus commences, and seems to have been both intended and accepted as a token of especial regard.

tions respecting the Catholics and Dissenters, which must naturally be agitated in consequence of the Union. The knowledge of your Majesty's general indisposition to any change of the laws on this subject would have made this a painful task to him; and it is become much more so by learning from some of his colleagues, and from other quarters, within these few days, the extent to which your Majesty entertains, and has declared, that sentiment.

He trusts your Majesty will believe that every principle of duty, gratitude, and attachment must make him look to your Majesty's ease and satisfaction, in preference to all considerations but those arising from a sense of what in his honest opinion is due to the real interest of your Majesty and your dominions. Under the impression of that opinion, he has concurred in what appeared to be the prevailing sentiments of the majority of the Cabinet,—that the admission of the Catholics and Dissenters to offices, and of the Catholics to Parliament (from which latter the Dissenters are not now excluded), would, under certain conditions to be specified, be highly advisable, with a view to the tranquillity and improvement of Ireland, and to the general interest of the United Kingdom.

For himself, he is on full consideration convinced that the measure would be attended with no danger to the Established Church, or to the Protestant interest in Great Britain or Ireland:—That now the Union has taken place, and with the new provisions which would make part of the plan, it could never give any such weight in office, or in Parliament, either to Catholics or Dissenters, as could give them any new means (if they were so disposed) of attacking the Establishment:—That the grounds on which the laws of exclusion now remaining were founded, have long been narrowed, and

are since the Union removed:—That those principles, formerly held by the Catholics, which made them considered as politically dangerous, have been for a course of time gradually declining, and, among the higher orders particularly, have ceased to prevail:—That the obnoxious tenets are disclaimed in the most positive manner by the oaths which have been required in Great Britain, and still more by one of those required in Ireland, as the condition of the indulgences already granted, and which might equally be made the condition of any new ones:—That if such an oath, containing (among other provisions) a denial of the power of absolution from its obligations, is not a security from Catholics, the Sacramental test is not more so:—That the political circumstances under which the exclusive laws originated, arising either from the conflicting power of hostile and nearly balanced sects, from the apprehension of a Popish Queen or Successor, a disputed succession and a foreign Pretender, and a division in Europe between Catholic and Protestant Powers, are no longer applicable to the present state of things:—That with respect to those of the Dissenters who it is feared entertain principles dangerous to the Constitution, a distinct political test, pointed against the doctrine of modern Jacobinism, would be a much more just and more effectual security than that which now exists, which may operate to the exclusion of conscientious persons well affected to the State, and is no guard against those of an opposite description—

That with respect to the Catholics of Ireland, another most important additional security, and one of which the effect would continually increase, might be provided by gradually attaching the Popish clergy to the Government, and, for this purpose, making them dependent for a part of their provision (under proper regulations) on

the State, and by also subjecting them to superintendence and control:—

That, besides these provisions, the general interests of the Established Church, and the security of the Constitution and Government, might be effectually strengthened by requiring the Political Test, before referred to, from the preachers of all Catholic or Dissenting congregations, and from the teachers of schools of every denomination.

It is on these principles Mr. Pitt humbly conceives a new security might be obtained for the Civil and Ecclesiastical Constitution of this country, more applicable to the present circumstances, more free from objection, and more effectual in itself, than any which now exists; and which would at the same time admit of extending such indulgences as must conciliate the higher orders of the Catholics, and by furnishing to a large class of your Majesty's Irish subjects a proof of the good will of the United Parliament, afford the best chance of giving full effect to the great object of the Union,—that of tranquillizing Ireland, and attaching it to this country.

It is with inexpressible regret, after all he now knows of your Majesty's sentiments, that Mr. Pitt troubles your Majesty thus at large with the general grounds of his opinion, and finds himself obliged to add that this opinion is unalterably fixed in his mind. It must, therefore, ultimately guide his political conduct, if it should be your Majesty's pleasure that, after thus presuming to open himself fully to your Majesty, he should remain in that responsible situation in which your Majesty has so long condescended graciously and favourably to accept his services. It will afford him, indeed, a great relief and satisfaction if he may be allowed to hope that your Majesty will deign maturely to weigh what he has now

humbly submitted, and to call for any explanation which any parts of it may appear to require.

In the interval which your Majesty may wish for consideration, he will not, on his part, importune your Majesty with any unnecessary reference to the subject; and will feel it his duty to abstain himself from all agitation of this subject in Parliament, and to prevent it, as far as depends on him, on the part of others. If, on the result of such consideration, your Majesty's objections to the measure proposed should not be removed, or sufficiently diminished to admit of its being brought forward with your Majesty's full concurrence, and with the whole weight of Government, it must be personally Mr. Pitt's first wish to be released from a situation which he is conscious that, under such circumstances, he could not continue to fill but with the greatest disadvantage.

At the same time, after the gracious intimation which has been recently conveyed to him of your Majesty's sentiments on this point, he will be acquitted of presumption in adding, that if the chief difficulties of the present crisis should not then be surmounted, or very materially diminished, and if your Majesty should continue to think that his humble exertions could in any degree contribute to conducting them to a favourable issue, there is no personal difficulty to which he will not rather submit than withdraw himself at such a moment from your Majesty's service. He would even, in such case, continue for such a short further interval as might be necessary to oppose the agitation or discussion of the question, as far as he can consistently with the line, to which he feels bound uniformly to adhere, of reserving to himself a full latitude on the principle itself, and objecting only to the time, and to the temper and circumstances of the moment. But he must entreat that,

on this supposition, it may be distinctly understood that he can remain in office no longer than till the issue (which he trusts on every account will be a speedy one) of the crisis now depending shall admit of your Majesty's more easily forming a new arrangement, and that he will then receive your Majesty's permission to carry with him into a private situation that affectionate and grateful attachment which your Majesty's goodness for a long course of years has impressed on his mind,—and that unabated zeal for the ease and honour of your Majesty's Government and for the public service which he trusts will always govern his conduct.

He has only to entreat your Majesty's pardon for troubling you on one other point, and taking the liberty of most respectfully, but explicitly, submitting to your Majesty the indispensable necessity of effectually discountenancing, in the whole of the interval, all attempts to make use of your Majesty's name, or to influence the opinion of any individual, or descriptions of men, on any part of this subject.

B.

Queen's House, Feb. 1, 1801.

I should not do justice to the warm impulse of my heart if I entered on the subject most unpleasant to my mind without first expressing that the cordial affection I have for Mr. Pitt, as well as high opinion of his talents and integrity, greatly add to my uneasiness on this occasion; but a sense of religious as well as political duty has made me, from the moment I mounted the throne, consider the Oath that the wisdom of our forefathers has enjoined the Kings of this realm to take at their Coronation, and enforced by the obligation of instantly following it in the course of the ceremony

with taking the Sacrament, as so binding a religious obligation on me to maintain the fundamental maxims on which our Constitution is placed, namely, the Church of England being the established one, and that those who hold employments in the State must be members of it, and consequently obliged not only to take Oaths against Popery, but to receive the Holy Communion agreeably to the rites of the Church of England.

This principle of duty must therefore prevent me from discussing any proposition tending to destroy this groundwork of our happy Constitution, and much more so that now mentioned by Mr. Pitt, which is no less than the complete overthrow of the whole fabric.

When the Irish Propositions were transmitted to me by a joint message from both Houses of the British Parliament, I told the Lords and Gentlemen sent on that occasion, that I would with pleasure and without delay forward them to Ireland; but that, as individuals, I could not help acquainting them that my inclination to an Union with Ireland was principally founded on a trust that the uniting the Established Churches of the two kingdoms would for ever shut the door to any further measures with respect to the Roman Catholics.

These two instances must show Mr. Pitt that my opinions are not those formed on the moment, but such as I have imbibed for forty years, and from which I never can depart; but, Mr. Pitt once acquainted with my sentiments, his assuring me that he will stave off the only question whereon I fear from his letter we can never agree—for the advantage and comfort of continuing to have his advice and exertions in public affairs I will certainly abstain from talking on this subject, which is the one nearest my heart. I cannot help if others pretend to guess at my opinions, which I have never disguised: but if those who unfortunately differ

with me will keep this subject at rest, I will on my part, most correctly on my part, be silent also; but this restraint I shall put on myself from affection for Mr. Pitt, but further I cannot go, for I cannot sacrifice my duty to any consideration.

Though I do not pretend to have the power of changing Mr. Pitt's opinion, when thus unfortunately fixed, yet I shall hope his sense of duty will prevent his retiring from his present situation to the end of my life; for I can with great truth assert that I shall, from public and private considerations, feel great regret if I shall ever find myself obliged at any time, from a sense of religious and political duty, to yield to his entreaties of retiring from his seat at the Board of Treasury.

G. R.

C.

Mr. Pitt to the King.

Downing Street, Tuesday, Feb. 3, 1801.

Mr. Pitt cannot help entreating your Majesty's permission to express how very sincerely he is penetrated with the affecting expressions of your Majesty's kindness and goodness to himself on the occasion of the communication with which he has been under the necessity of troubling your Majesty. It is therefore with additional pain he feels himself bound to state that the final decision which your Majesty has formed on the great subject in question (the motives to which he respects and honours), and his own unalterable sense of the line which public duty requires from him, must make him consider the moment as now arrived when, on the principles which he has already explained, it must be his first wish to be released as soon as possible from his present situation. He certainly retains the same anxious desire, in the time and mode of quitting it, to consult as

much as possible your Majesty's ease and convenience, and to avoid embarrassment. But he must frankly confess to your Majesty that the difficulty even of his temporary continuance must necessarily be increased, and may very shortly become insuperable, from what he conceives to be the import of one passage in your Majesty's note, which hardly leaves him room to hope that your Majesty thinks those steps can be taken for effectually discountenancing all attempts to make use of your Majesty's name, or to influence opinions on this subject, which he has ventured to represent as indispensably necessary during any interval in which he might remain in office. He has, however, the less anxiety in laying this sentiment before your Majesty because, independent of it, he is more and more convinced that, your Majesty's final decision being once taken, the sooner he is allowed to act upon it the better it will be for your Majesty's service. He trusts, and sincerely believes, that your Majesty cannot find any long delay necessary for forming an arrangement for conducting your service with credit and advantage, and that, on the other hand, the feebleness and uncertainty which is almost inseparable from a temporary Government must soon produce an effect both at home and abroad which might lead to serious inconvenience. Mr. Pitt trusts your Majesty will believe that a sincere anxiety for the future ease and strength of your Government is one strong motive for his presuming thus to press this consideration.

D.

Queen's House, Feb. 5, 1801.

The box from Mr. Pitt contained two letters, and a warrant in favour of Mr. Long. I cannot have the

smallest difficulty in signing the proposed warrant, as I think him a very valuable man, and know how much Mr. Pitt esteems him.

I had flattered myself that, on the strong assurance I gave Mr. Pitt of keeping perfectly silent on the subject whereon we entirely differ, provided on his part he kept off from any disquisition on it for the present, which was the main object of the letter I wrote to him on Sunday, we both understood our present line of conduct; but as I unfortunately find Mr. Pitt does not draw the same conclusion, I must come to the unpleasant decision, as it will deprive me of his political service, of acquainting him that, rather than forego what I look on as my duty, I will without unnecessary delay attempt to make the most creditable arrangement, and such as Mr. Pitt will think most to the advantage of my service, as well as to the security of the public; but he must not be surprised if I cannot fix how soon that can possibly be done, though he may rest assured that it shall be done with as much expedition as so difficult a subject will admit.

G. R.

Feb. 16, 1801.

The services of Sir Sidney Smith certainly deserve the public notice Mr. Pitt so properly proposes. I therefore return the Message, which I have signed.

G. R.

MY DEAR PITT, Feb. 18, 1801, 8 P.M.

As you are closing, much to my sorrow, your political career, I cannot help expressing the joy I feel that the Ways and Means for the present year have

been this day agreed to in the Committee without any debate, and apparently to the satisfaction of the House.

G. R.

February 20, 1801.

The King is much pleased at hearing from Mr. Pitt that on Mr. Stuart's Motion for a Committee to inquire into the failure of the expedition against Ferrol, Sir James Pulteney made a very able and satisfactory explanation of his conduct.

His Majesty cannot help expressing infinite satisfaction at Mr. Pitt's feeling the expressions of the note the King wrote to him on Wednesday evening. They were only the effusions of the real affection His Majesty will ever have for Mr. Pitt.

G. R.

END OF VOL. III.

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